

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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No. 998.

NEW YORK, JULY 18, 1917.

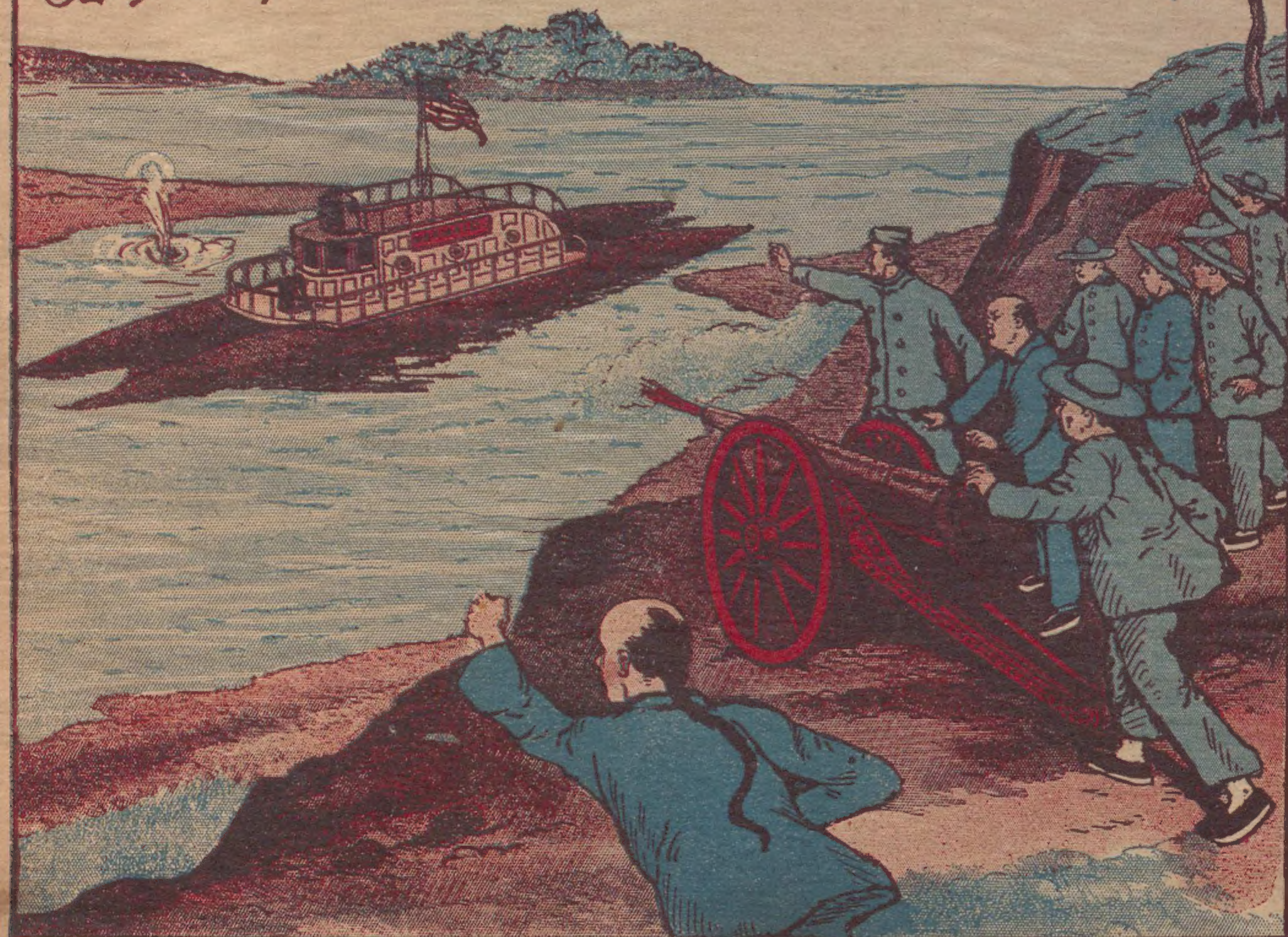
Price SIX Cents.

JACK WRIGHT'S SUBMARINE CATAMARAN!

OR, THE PHANTOM SHIP OF THE YELLOW SEA.

By NONAME.

AND OTHER STORIES



There came a belch of fire and smoke, a thunderous roar and a terrible scream as a heavy shot came hurtling down from the bluffs toward the Mermaid.

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OR

THE PHANTOM SHIP OF THE YELLOW SEA

By "NONAME"

CHAPTER I.

OFF TO THE RESCUE.

It was a dark, gloomy night in September, 18—, and a thick haze overhung the sea, on the Atlantic coast, in the vicinage of Wrightstown at the head of a small, land-locked bay.

Lights in the houses glowed dimly out upon the gloom, and the threatening aspect kept people indoors around their cheerful firesides.

There was a magnificent dwelling on the outskirts of the town, owned and occupied by a boy of nineteen, after whose father the place had been named, to which the reader's attention is called.

Jack Wright was the boy's name, and he was an inventor of strange submarine boats, the marvelous nature and accomplishments of which gained him a world-wide reputation.

On the night in question he sat within the library of his home on the ground floor, intently studying some complicated drawings he had devised, showing the construction of a new contrivance which he had just completed building, for navigating under water.

The boy was finely built, handsomely dressed, and had dark, curly hair, snapping, black eyes, and a handsome, resolute face.

His library was a small, beautifully furnished room, containing a great many books, and illumined by a soft drop-light.

As he sat there engrossed with his work, and unsuspecting of danger, he did not see the figure of a stalwart man appear at the open window in back of him, and standing upon the broad piazza, peer in at him, with a black mask covering his face.

The mysterious prowler was clad in a shabby suit of clothes, and clutched a dagger in his hand, the long blade of which gleamed brightly when the beams of the light fell upon it.

Having seen that the young inventor was quite alone, the stranger softly stepped into the room, glided over to Jack, and holding the point of his weapon close to the boy's throat he lightly touched his arm.

"Jack Wright!" he exclaimed in deep, bass tones.

Had the young inventor been nervous, the sudden shock of being thus accosted when imagining he was all alone might have caused a scene.

But Jack had no such timidity, for he coolly and without a start glanced slowly around and saw, without any visible emotion, that a masked stranger stood behind him, menacing his life.

He sized the man up from head to foot, let his glance rest upon the dagger for a moment, and then asked, in calm, steady tones:

"Well, sir, what do you want?"

The stranger was surprised at the boy's careless demeanor. "You are a nervy fellow!" he could not help remarking, in admiration.

"Are you going to murder me?" asked the young inventor, in careless tones, "or did you do this merely to frighten me, sir?"

"Your life is at stake!" emphatically replied the man.

"Ah! Then you have a motive. What is it—robbery, malice, revenge, or what?"

"I want all your valuables," confessed the stranger. "I am a thief!"

"Now you are acting sensibly. My mind is relieved, for I was perplexed about you."

"You observe that I hold a dagger at your throat, I presume?"

"Of course," assented the boy, shooting a side glance at the blade.

"Its point is steeped in deadly poison, and a mere scratch with it would kill you," said the masked man, in significant tones.

"Well?" queried Jack, still unmoved by the slightest tremor of fear.

"If you do not instantly give me the wallet filled with money, which I saw you place in your breast-pocket ten minutes ago, I will thrust my weapon up to the hilt in your neck."

The deadly earnestness of the man's tones, coupled with his savage demeanor, told plainly that he would brook no trifling.

"Ain't you a stranger in Wrightstown?" demurely asked Jack, who wanted to gain time in order to give any one a chance to enter and interrupt the startling game the man was playing.

"I am an escaped convict from the adjacent town of D—. There is no use lying about the matter," admitted the man. "My object is to get money to enable myself to seek safety in flight. I may as well be candid. Now, hand it over, or take the consequence!"

"And if I refuse—what then?" demanded Jack curiously.

"I am a desperate man, and I'll take it from your corpse!"

At that moment another man appeared at the window.

He saw at a glance what was transpiring in the library.

And with one spring he landed in the room, and caught the masked man by the throat; with a powerful jerk backward he slammed the thief down upon the floor, and as the poisoned dagger fell out of his hand the newcomer fell upon him and roared:

"Donner und blitzen! I vas got you alretty!"

He was a young Dutchman, with a dumpy figure, exceedingly fat, his face red with anger and his light hair bristling.

"Oh, heavens!" gasped the thief, as the newcomer seized him by the hair and banged his head on the floor till his senses began to get hazy. "Stop! You're battering my head in!"

"Hang on to him, Fritz!" cried Jack, recognizing the newcomer as one of his best friends. "Don't let the rascal go!"

"Py shiminetty! I vas proke his het sooner as do dot!" gasped the young Dutchman, who was of an excitable, pugnacious nature.

Jack ran to his friend's assistance and in a twinkling they tied the thief hand and foot with their handkerchiefs, and arose.

He had an ugly, hang-dog, countenance, they saw below his mask; and he swore at them roundly, but they paid no heed to his threats and raving.

"You arrived just in time!" said Jack, with a smile. "He was going to kill me, Fritz; but—hark! What's that—voices?"

"Dere vas some men by der yard," said Fritz Schneider, as he peered out the window. "Yah, und here dey come up by der biazza."

"What do they want, I wonder?"

Just then several excited men appeared outside of the window.

"There he is now!" shouted one of them, and he pointed in at the thief, and the strangers came in through the window.

"What's the matter, gentlemen?" asked Jack, facing them.

"That man, Tom Bullock, is an escaped prisoner, and we are constables, who have tracked him here from the D—jail," explained the man.

"Oh, I see! Take your prisoner back, then, for I do not want him here," said Jack, with a smile. "And if you haven't got evidence enough to convict the rascal, call upon me and I'll have him sentenced just for trying to rob and murder me."

"Did he do that?" asked the man in surprise. "I am sorry. But when we put him behind the bars again, he goes to stay ten years."

And so saying the men took their prisoner away, with many apologies for the trouble caused the boy.

Left alone with Fritz Schneider, the young inventor laughed and said:

"I hope I'll never get such a call again; but if I do I'll probably get the worst of it. I'm glad you came, for more reasons than one, Fritz."

"Yah," answered the young Dutchman, vigorously nodding his frowsy head and pulling down his vest, "I dink so somedimes."

"I was just looking over the plans of the Mermaid," said Jack, "and as my new submarine catamaran is perfect in every detail, after a year of work at constructing her, I do not need them any more."

And igniting the papers upon the beautiful, tiled hearth, he burned them; watching them until they were consumed to ashes.

The young inventor had completed one of the most marvelous boats of the age, and after several trials he found that it worked to a far greater degree of perfection than two previous submarine boats of which he was the author, and in which he made voyages.

It was at that moment floating in a workshop of elaborate design, at the foot of the magnificent garden, along the back of which ran a wide, deep creek, which emptied into Wrightstown Bay.

As soon as the paper was consumed Jack turned to his friend and said:

"Fritz, I must find some use for my catamaran now."

"Och! vot you vant alretty—to go away mit dot poat?"

"Remember the pleasure, exciting adventures, and all the money we gained by our two first voyages across the ocean? Wouldn't you like to repeat them?"

"I dink so," said Fritz, lighting his pipe.

Jack walked over to the window and peered out at the gloomy aspect stretching all the way to the seashore, where, upon the rocky crags, he had caused a lighthouse to be built, and its glowing beacon now shed its rays out upon the sea.

Rain had begun to fall in torrents, thunder was muttering hoarsely in the distance, and upon the heaving billows that dashed furiously into the bay a fleet of fishing smacks were tossing wildly, and straining at their cables.

The raging sea was beating against the base of the lighthouse, the monster waves breaking in surf that boomed like artillery and flung showers of foam and spray high in the air.

"It is a terrible night!" exclaimed Jack. "And, hark! What's that?"

He bent his head in an attitude of listening, and heard a dull booming that arose above the noise of the raging elements.

"The minute guns of a ship in distress off the coast!" he muttered.

"Shiminey Christmas!" cried Fritz excitedly. "Und dere goes de lighthouse bell! You hear dot? You hear dot?"

Clang-clang! clang-clang! pealed out the tolling bell from the lighthouse tower, warning the inhabitants of Wrights-

town that there was a tempest-tossed vessel offshore in need of help, and the dreadful intonations caused many a heart to quake, and many a man to shudder with pity and dread.

"See!" exclaimed Jack. "Every one in the town is aroused by the doleful bell and the booming of the gun. They are all leaving their houses, and men, women and children are hurrying out to the rocky headland to see the wreck and to render aid, if they can."

Boom! Boom! roared out the smothered tones of the guns, and soon the beetling rocks were swarming with people, all of whom gazed long and earnestly out over the black waste of turbid waters at several signal rockets, streaking up to the dark sky.

When the lightning blazed across the inky heavens they saw a storm-tossed ship, a league from shore, with masts and rigging blown away by the furious gale.

It was beaten by the waves that breached over her decks, and they saw a number of her crew clinging on for dear life, while the shrieking wind drove the hapless wreck in toward the rocks.

The rudder lines were broken, and the craft was helpless now.

From where they stood, Jack and his friends saw the harrowing scene, and a thrill of pity passed over them.

"If the ship strikes the rocks it is lost!" said the young inventor.

"Couldn't ve do noding dot vhe safe her?" gasped Fritz, with a shiver.

"Yes; follow me! We will go out to her in the Mermaid, and tow her to a safe anchorage within the bay."

"Hurray!" yelled Fritz, delightedly. "Vhere vhas Dim?"

"Tim Topstay? The old sailor is on board of the boat now. He got three sheets in the wind to-day at the tavern, and went aboard to sleep off the effects. Come, hurry, and with the help of God we may be able to rescue the shipwrecked sailors."

They rushed out of the house at the top of their speed, and dashing across the garden they ran into the workshop.

Part of the floor was inundated, and in this water floated a huge catamaran of peculiar formation, built of aluminum, a white metal like burnished silver, stronger, tougher and lighter than steel.

The doors leading to the creek were flung open, the two boys sprang aboard the boat, entered the pilot-house, and Jack started the machinery, driving the catamaran out upon its errand of rescue.

CHAPTER II.

THE LETTER.

The throng of people swarming upon the rocks were suddenly startled by seeing a huge ball of glaring light shooting out a broad sheen of dazzling beams across the bay, near the creek.

It went plunging rapidly toward the opening in the headland, and then a tremendous halo of light flashed up all around it, and they beheld a peculiar-looking catamaran, the streaking fire coming from a powerful searchlight on top of the pilot-house, and the halo pouring from numerous dead lights along the conical hulls.

Both of these hulls were cylinders eight feet in diameter, tapering to points at both ends, and each stern was furnished with a rudder and two propellers apiece. The hulls were one hundred feet long.

They were joined by a metal deck, in front of which was a round pilot-house with glass windows, the muzzle of a pneumatic gun protruding from the front, and a cabin aft of it in which were doors and circular windows guarded by steel wire netting.

From the top of the cabin to the sterns extended rods from which shafts ran down to the decks of the hulls with propellers upon them for rising or descending under water.

In the wheel-house stood Jack, and beside him a man in sailor costume, with a wooden leg, a glass eye and a sandy beard.

He was old Tim Topstay, chiefly notable for his lying propensity, his quality as a navigator, and his intimate friendship for Jack.

Tim was keeping a keen lookout ahead, and as the catamaran flew over the tossing waves at a speed of forty knots an hour, he exclaimed, as they opened up the headland:

"Hard a-port! Hard a-port, lad!"

"Port it is, Tim!" replied the boy, spinning the wheel around.

"Ease her off a bit to starboard, Jack."

"Do you see the ship yet, old fellow?"

"Ay, ay; an' only half a mile from shore, by thunder!"

On dashed the catamaran, riding the furious bellows like a cork, and a wild cheer burst from the town people upon the rocks as they saw the boat flash by, and realized that it was going to the rescue of the shipwrecked crew.

The young Wizard of Wrightstown, as Jack was called, was a prime favorite with every one, and not a soul of those anxious people but what offered up a prayer for his safety.

The pilot-house was about ten feet in diameter, and from his position at the wheel the boy could control every movement of the vessel by a series of levers upon a switchboard on the wall.

He turned one of them as the boat drew near the wreck, and slackened the speed, while Tim kept the rays of the searchlight flashed upon the drifting ship.

Flinging open one of the plates of thick, tough glass in the turret, the boy hailed the despairing crew with:

"Ship ahoy! Stand by to catch a tow-line."

"Ay, ay!" came an eager response from the wreck.

"Fritz!" shouted the young inventor.

"Yah!" replied the Dutch boy, emerging through a door from the cabin.

"Make fast a hawser to the stanchion aft, and fling them the other end."

The Dutch boy saluted, and disappeared through the door again.

Jack then drove the Mermaid as near to the wreck as he could, and a moment later Fritz emerged from a door in the rear of the deck-house and flung the sailor a long line.

It was made fast to the wreck, and with the other end secured to his boat, Jack turned her around, and towed the vessel back toward Wrightstown Bay, dragging it from the very jaws of destruction.

A tremendous cheer burst from the nervous spectators upon the shore, which was echoed by the aided sailors as soon as this was done, and after a hard battle with the raging wind and waves, Jack towed the wreck into the bay.

"Did you notice that she is a sloop of war of the U. S. Government?" the boy asked Tim.

"Ay, ay, lad!" answered the old sailor, with kindling eyes; "an' dash my fingerhead if it didn't 'mind me o' when I sarved along o' yer father aboard o' ther frigate Wabash. One night——"

"No yarns, Tim; no yarns now; we haven't got time," the boy interposed. "Here is a good anchorage now. Hail them."

The old sailor obeyed, and the dismantled ship came to anchor in safety off Wrightstown, and the people came flocking back from the rocks, boats put out to the wreck, and as Jack's hawser was cast off the fishermen took the saved crew ashore.

Jack drove his boat back to the creek, up which she passed, and turning the boat into his workshop again the doors were shut and they disembarked after extinguishing the electric lights.

"I have found use for my new invention at last," laughed the boy, as he returned to the house, "and I must say the Mermaid behaved nobly in the heavy sea way, don't you think so, boys?"

"She vhas pedder as noddin' you effer invended pefore," asserted Fritz.

"Ye kin shiver me, but I never sighted the beat o' her afore!" exclaimed Tim enthusiastically. "But what are ye goin' to do wi' her, Jack?"

"That's what puzzles me," replied the boy, in perplexed tones, as they hurried into the house out of the wind and rain.

"Mr. Wright, here's a letter for you, sir," said a trim little servant, handing Jack an envelope. "It came by the late mail."

The boy entered the library with his friends and glanced at the letter.

"Hello! it's from the Government!" he exclaimed, in surprise.

Tim and Fritz sat down, and the boy opened the letter and read it.

A look of amazement overspread his face when he finished.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed. "Here's a surprise, boys."

"Wot's a s'prise?" demanded Tim, fastening his solitary eye on Jack.

"The contents of this letter."

"Vhy yer don't read it, den?" growled Fritz.

"I will. Just listen," said Jack; and he read the letter aloud.

It was couched in the following terms:

"Department of War, Washington, D. C., Sept. 10, 18—.

"Mr. J. Wright:—Having learned that you invented a submarine craft of light draft, of the torpedo boat type, I beg leave to call your attention to the fact that you can make it available to the United States Government. For the past year the merchant marine plying between San Francisco and Shanghai have suffered greatly from attacks of an alleged phantom ship in the Whang Hai, or Yellow Sea.

"Up to date there have been ten American ships reported to us as having foundered by collision with this vessel, the crews and passengers barely saving their lives by escaping in their boats.

"Conflicting and grossly exaggerated stories are told of these assaults, all of which allege the supernatural appearance of the ship, and an appeal for protection has been made to the United States Government.

"The warships of the navy are all of too great draught to navigate the shallow waters of the Yellow Sea with safety, and Congress had therefore appropriated the sum of \$50,000 as a reward for the entire extermination of the mysterious vessel which has occasioned the trouble.

No efforts have thus far been made to secure the reward, and the nuisance has gone on unabated until there is a possibility of American traffic with the ports of the Yellow Sea and along the Yang-tse-kiang coming to an abrupt end, causing an immense loss to our American commerce.

"If you desire to undertake the task of capturing, exterminating, or exposing the phantom ship, by communicating with me you will ascertain all details, and become duly empowered to act under a Letter of Marque as an agent of this Government. Yours respectfully,

"James Braine,

"Secretary of War."

The contents of the letter astonished the trio, and for several moments not one of them uttered a word when Jack finished, for they were all thinking the matter over intently.

At last Jack spoke:

"What do you think of it, boys?"

"Think? Lor' bless yer, lad," ejaculated Tim, "it's jist ther werry chance I've been prayin' fer like a sinner, so's ter get erway from here an' enjoy a trip on ther Mermaid, a-crossin' ther sea where I b'long."

"Yah—und me, too," said Fritz solemnly.

"Then you are both in favor of attempting this task?"

"Aye, aye!" exclaimed Tim.

"Yah, yah!" echoed Fritz.

"And so am I," declared Jack.

That settled their future movements then, and the boy at once wrote a letter to Mr. Braine, accepting his proposal and asking for details.

When this was finished the three friends sat around the table, and Jack sketched out their plan of action on the prospective cruise, and gave Tim and Fritz instructions about fitting out their submarine boat for its long journey.

Both of his friends lived in magnificent dwellings close to Jack's residence, and conducted flourishing businesses, and when they left the boy that night they promised to begin their preparations the next day, to get everything in readiness.

On the following morning the young inventor had scarcely finished his breakfast when a servant announced the commanding officer of the ship Jack had saved the night before, and going into the parlor the boy met the officer.

He was a middle-aged man in uniform, and wore a black beard.

"I have come to personally thank you for the great service you rendered my crew and ship last night," said the officer warmly, shaking the boy's outstretched hand, "for if you had not come to our assistance the poor craft would have been wrecked."

"It is always a pleasure to me to help people in distress," replied Jack. "I hope none of your was lost?"

"Not one, I am happy to say. The Sea Cat was badly damaged, of course, but can easily be repaired. Had not our rudder lines broken in the storm, we might have made a safe harbor or rode out the blow. As it was, we got into

dire trouble. But it was a most singular craft you saved us with."

"Yes; an invention of my own," replied Jack, with a laugh. "It is a submarine catamaran, and I have no doubt that she is the fastest boat in the world, so far as speed goes."

"So I observed," replied the man. "An electric boat, I presume?"

"Yes, sir; and much different in looks and operation than any submarine craft ever yet invented."

"Have you any objection to showing her to me?"

"None whatever. I'll give you a ride in her, if you like, too."

"Nothing would afford me greater pleasure, sir."

"Then come with me," said Jack courteously, as he put on his hat, and he led the officer out of the back door.

All trace of the storm had blown away, and the sea had calmed down, the sky was blue and cloudless, the sun shone down, and the turning leaves of bush and tree were spotted with globules of water that flashed like myriads of diamonds.

The officer glanced around, and exclaimed:

"You have got a beautiful place here, Mr. Wright."

"It was not so fine a few years ago," laughed Jack, recalling to mind the time when he and his father lived there, inventing the first boat Jack constructed, before he gained the wealth he then had.

They entered the workshop and went on board the Mermaid, the officer admiring the graceful outlines and odd shape of the catamaran.

But as they passed within the boat a dark look of exultation crossed the man's face, and he uttered softly to himself:

"The young fool! He little suspects my design. How well I deceived him! Let him take me out into his boat. I'll guarantee he won't come back in it alive. It is strange how one crime leads to another."

CHAPTER III.

THE THREE SUBMARINE BOATS.

Jack first explained to the officer the advantage of using aluminum in the construction of his boat, as its great strength was better adapted to resisting the enormous pressure under water than steel.

He then brought him into the pilot house, and after showing the indicators that gauged the power, speed, depth and so on, he then explained the different levers, showed his nautical instruments, charts and furniture, and then brought him back in the cabin.

It communicated with the pilot house by a door, and was a large, magnificently furnished room, combining a place to dine or lounge, with a number of curtained berths in which to sleep, while the library and ornaments and pictures were of the best to be obtained.

It was illuminated by arc lights, as was the entire boat.

Passing through another door, they entered a combined galley and storeroom, fitted up with every requisite; in back of that was an apartment filled with arms, ammunition, diving suits of aluminum, rope chains and other paraphernalia appertaining to divers, and in the end room was the electrical plant for operating the boat.

The room was equipped with a motor, storage batteries, and a dynamo.

The screws of the catamaran were twin 60-inch blades, and at such a pitch as to allow the motor to revolve them at about 1,000 revolutions a minute for their maximum speed, while the motor itself was coupled directly to them, the armature and screw shafts being rigidly united, and practically forming a single shaft.

Between the motor bearing and stuffing box were spring and double thrust bearings, self lubricating, and the motor was of the series kind, the armature and field wires being permanently connected in wires.

Its winding was such that it would carry a current of 700 amperes of 2,000 volts pressure, equal to 200 electrical horse power.

The accumulators were 2,000 in number, of the 23 m type, contained in vulcanite cells 6 3-4 inches long, 7 1-8 inches wide, by 10 inches high, closed by hermetically sealed vulcanized covers, save for small perforations which allowed any excess of gas to escape. Each cell consisted of twenty-five perforated lead plates, filled with a paste of oxide of lead and diluted sulphuric acid, placed side by side, and

separated by vulcanized forks; each alternate plate was connected to a lead strip projecting through the covers, forming a pole of one cell, while the others were similarly connected to form the other pole.

Each cell had four volts electro-motive force, and an unlimited capacity of ampere hours, as the automatic dynamo recharged them as soon as the supply they contained was exhausted.

From one end of every group of fifty cells an insulated wire ran to the switchboard in the pilot house, after passing through the different parts of the boat to which the electric power had to be applied as occasions demanded.

"It is the most complete arrangement I ever saw," said the officer admiringly, as he glanced at the shelves upon which the batteries were stored, "but I do not understand yet how you can go under water in this boat for any length of time."

"The hulls are, of course, hollow," replied Jack, "and are divided into three compartments apiece, all filled with air. There are pumps which are put in motion by electricity, forcing the air out of the central chambers, and compressing it into the end ones. A sea trap in each central chamber is then opened, allowing the water to rush in in any quantity desired, and the weight sinks the boat. By starting the wheels on the bars astern, I can raise or lower the boat at will to any depth when in motion."

"Oh, I see."

"At each row of deadlights are placed incandescent lights with reflectors," continued the boy, "which throw out a halo around the boat and illumine the water for half a mile when under the surface. Did you observe the pneumatic gun projecting from the wheel-house?"

"I did."

"Well, it has extraordinary force, and, once loaded, as it has reservoir air chambers, it is good for one hundred shots."

"But where do you get the air to breathe under water?"

"From reservoirs in the bulkheads, where it is compressed and dispensed as we need it automatically. Besides this, I have a spray of lime injected from atomizers in the ceilings to purify it, and valves to carry off the vitiated atmosphere used up by breathing."

"This boat must have cost you a fortune, as the aluminum of which it is built is expensive, and every detail within it is of the most elaborate design and costly material."

"I have spent half a million building her," carelessly replied Jack.

The officer gave a violent start, and glanced around at the massive steel braces, posts and girders forming the skeleton of the boat.

"Do you expect to get your money back?" he asked.

"No," promptly replied Jack. "I built this boat for my own amusement."

"You must be a boy millionaire!" the man involuntarily exclaimed.

"In one respect you are mistaken," quietly replied Jack. "I have always been ambitious to make a flourishing city of Wrightstown, and I invest most of my money in building houses, stores and factories to increase the population, and it is steadily growing now."

"Still you get an income from the rents," said the officer. "But, as I see most of the houses are built of wood, I suppose you are heavily insured, owing to the absence of a large fire department?"

"On the contrary," replied the boy, "I have but little insurance, as I cannot get it on account of our poor facilities for preventing fires. It is my intention to improve it shortly, however, in order to be able to cover myself against possible losses. We have so very few fires here, however, that the matter seldom troubles me."

"How about a trip on the water, as you suggested, Mr. Wright?"

"We will go, if you like," replied the boy, with a nod; and they entered the pilot house, where Jack rang an electric gong.

Two of his workmen opened the creek doors, and grasping the wheel, Jack turned lever No. 1, and started the boat out.

It ran down the waterway to the bay, and as it glided out upon the now glassy surface of the bay, Jack was surprised to see a number of men running from the town, shouting and gesturing.

They continued on down to the water's edge, and ran out on a dock that projected out into the bay.

"What's the matter with them, I wonder?" muttered Jack.

"Oh, they must be shouting to some one on the water," replied the officer, as a pallor overspread his face and a glitter came to his eyes.

"There ain't any boat but this one out on the water," said Jack, glancing around with a perplexed look on his features.

"In that case, they can't be calling any one."

"Yes, they are; listen!"

The men had all reached the edge of the dock by this time, and, pausing there, began to hail at the top of their voices:

"Mermaid ahoy! Mermaid ahoy!"

They were fishermen, civilians, and sailors from the Sea Cat, it was evident by their attire, and they all seemed to be very much excited.

"Why, they are calling to us!" said Jack, his face clearing.

"Don't pay any attention to them," remarked the officer, with a dissatisfied look. "Wait till we return."

"It won't be any trouble to run over to them on the way out," said Jack. "We may as well find out what's wanted. They all look as if they were very much excited. Don't you see that some of them are part of your own crew, captain?"

The man nodded, and as Jack turned the catamaran toward the dock, he was amazed to observe how agitated his passenger had suddenly become.

"What's the matter—are you sick?" he asked wonderingly.

"I don't feel very well," replied the man, in trembling tones.

A clammy perspiration had now burst out upon his forehead.

"I had better put you ashore on the dock, then," said Jack.

"No, no!" was the officer's hasty reply, accompanied by a violent start. "I don't want to go ashore. I don't want you to land."

"Why not?" demanded Jack, in amazement.

"I have my reasons. Turn back."

"No, sir!" exclaimed Jack bluntly.

"If you don't," excitedly replied the officer, "I'll kill you."

And whipping a revolver out of his pocket, he aimed it at Jack's heart with deliberate precision, and the boy obeyed him.

The young inventor was greatly amazed at this proceeding.

"That's a nice way to act," he exclaimed indignantly. "What do you mean by treating me this way, after all I did for you?"

The man uttered a sardonic laugh.

"You never did anything for me," he said bluntly.

"Didn't I save your life, and your ship?" Jack demanded.

"No, you didn't. I ain't the captain of the Sea Cat, as I said."

"You ain't?"

"Of course not. I lied to you."

"Then, who the deuce are you?"

"Tom Bullock," replied the man. "See here—do you know me now?"

He pulled off the false beard he wore and flung it on the floor.

"So you are the fellow who tried to rob me last night?" said Jack.

"I am. Do you remember my face?"

"No. You were masked."

"So I was. I have deceived you famously, haven't I?"

"It's no wonder; I never saw the captain of the Sea Cat close by."

"Oh, I knew that. You see, I escaped the constables last night, and found the shipwrecked crew at the Sea Spider House. Then I stole this uniform of the captain's while it was drying, and having this false beard with me, I disguised myself. Then I carried out the plan I heard the captain purpose doing by calling on you."

"Ah—you schemed to steal this catamaran to escape?"

"Exactly," replied the man coolly. "You are a good guesser. You will now proceed across the bay and out on the sea. I will then give you further instructions how to act. Do you understand?"

There was nothing for Jack to do but obey, for the desperate man would doubtless blow his brains out if he re-

fused, and then manage the boat himself, as the boy had innocently shown him just how to work it.

It was evident to Jack that the men on shore knew that the fugitive was aboard of the boat, and they must have learned it by tracking him to the workshop, where the employes had doubtless admitted that he had gone off in the boat.

The boy was entirely at the mercy of the man, too, for he had no weapons with him, but he kept a keen lookout for a chance to turn the tables on him.

The machinery was only working at half power, and the boy glanced back, when with a violent start he saw that the Mermaid was now being pursued by two more submarine boats which he had built and used in times gone by.

One was the Sea Spider, which Fritz was guiding, and the other was the electric turtle, managed by Tim, and upon the decks of both vessels were a score of armed men.

It was evident to Jack that Tom Bullock had committed some atrocious deed to cause such anxiety for his recapture, and he saw that his two friends must have suspected he was in trouble to have taken the two boats out to pursue the catamaran.

As soon as the fugitive saw the pursuing boats and armed men, he grew nervous and intensely excited.

"On!" he yelled hoarsely. "Faster—faster, upon your life! Put on full speed, curse you, or they'll overtake us and hang me! If you don't outstrip them, by heavens I'll kill you—I'll kill you!"

There was a terrible look upon his face, and Jack dared not disobey him, for his life was at stake.

CHAPTER IV.

A NIGHT OF HORROR.

Jack turned the lever around as far as it would go, and the catamaran dashed ahead with such fearful velocity that Tom Bullock fairly became frightened.

Fast as the two first inventions Jack built had been, the new one so rapidly outstripped them that in four minutes they were left a mile astern, and steadily kept losing ground.

The Mermaid was a marvel.

She glided over the top of the waves as lightly as a cork, and in a twinkling shot out on the ocean.

"Which way now?" demanded the boy.

The fugitive looked around.

As soon as he took his glance away, Jack seized a pair of rubber gloves, shot his hand into one and pulled a wire from the wall.

Slight as was the noise he made, Tom Bullock heard it and instantly fastened a keen, scowling glance upon him.

"What was that?" he demanded suspiciously.

"I put on my gloves," replied Jack, in cool tones.

"What for?"

"To guard my hands from chafing on the wheel spokes."

"Oh, but you've got a wire in your hand!"

"Yes; it's broken. Will you hold the wheel till I fix it?"

"No tricks, mind you!"

"Can't you keep keep me covered with your pistol?"

"That's so. Go ahead," said Bullock, grasping the wheel with one hand.

Jack fastened one of the wires to a binding post and turned one of the levers, causing a current of electricity to flash into the wheel.

As it was made of metal it readily took the current, and Tom Bullock suddenly gave a terrible yell as it shot into him, bent himself convulsively double, and his grip tightened on the spoke.

Another wave of current struck him, and twisting his body all out of shape, and burning his hand as if he had clasped a red-hot coal, it knocked him flying across the room, filling him with such unutterable agony that he shrieked and fainted.

Jack glanced down at him in pity, for the agony suffered by the wretch was as if every tingling nerve in his body had been grasped by a pair of red-hot pincers, and had been torn out by the roots.

"Poor wretch!" the boy muttered. "I hated to do it, but there was no other way to save myself. He's done for now, though."

He disconnected the wire, and as the wheel was then safe to handle with the gloves on, he grasped the spokes, turned the boat around and sped back for the entrance to the hav-

It was reached in a few moments, and he saw the Sea Spider and the Turtle coming up, full speed, and opened a window.

"It's all right, boys—I've got him!" he cried cheerily.

"Hurrah!" yelled the pursuers. "Hurrah for Jack Wright!"

"Has he been up to any more mischief?"

"Murdered one of the constables last night, and took his pistol," was the reply.

"Great heavens! It's no wonder he was so frightened, desperate, and anxious to escape. Turn back, and I'll land him, if he's alive."

Away sped the three boats for the pier, and as the news had spread, a large gathering of people came down to the shore.

The Mermaid took the lead and kept it, the two other boats coming on in regular order after it, and soon reached the dock.

Here the stunned fugitive was landed and carried to the hotel, where they put him in bed and summoned a physician.

As soon as Tim and Fritz landed their crews they ran their boats up the creek after the catamaran, and the three strange crafts were put away in the big workshop.

Jack's two friends spent the day preparing the catamaran for her long journey, and by nightfall everything was in readiness.

By the time Jack retired to his library the night was well advanced, and although the sky was clear, a strong wind came in from the sea.

Ten o'clock struck and Jack stepped out into the hall, when there came a furious ring at the door-bell.

The boy flung it open, and saw one of his workmen on the threshold.

"Well, what's the matter now?" queried the young inventor.

"Tom Bullock has escaped from the tavern, sir!" gasped the man.

"What! Escaped? How?"

"They thought he was as good as dead from that electric shock, sir, an' didn't guard him. But he wuz only playin' possum; slipped out a winder when nobody was lookin' an' got away."

"What a disappointment for the police!"

"They've been searchin' all over for him, but he ain't found yet, an'——"

"Hark! What is that? The fire bell!"

"Sure enough, so it is; an' look there, it's a dozen fires!"

The man pointed from the piazza in several directions, and the startled boy glanced around and saw smoke rising in several places.

"Ding-dong! Ding-dong! sounded the dismal clang from the tower in the town hall, awakening every one from their slumbers.

People rushed from their houses and thronged the streets, and the volunteer fire department turned out, fifty men dragging the only engine Wrightstown boasted of, and many more pulling the hook and ladder truck, and a dozen at the hose carriage.

Shouts began to peal out in the streets, pounding footsteps of the running firemen arose, wheels rumbled, engine bells clanged, and a scene of excitement began to arise when it was found that more fires continued to break out in new places.

Dense clouds of smoke began to roll up, mingled with licking tongues of flames, millions of sparks shot up in the air, and the wind, catching the fire, spread it with startling rapidity.

"By heavens, the whole town is afire!" gasped Jack, in horror.

He put on his hat and dashed out of the house.

"It's the work of an incendiary!" he heard people shout on all sides.

Just then the conversation which occurred on the Mermaid returned to Jack's mind, when Tom Bullock asked him if he had his property insured, and a thrill passed through the boy, for he saw in this fire the work of vengeance.

Bullock had escaped, and to gain revenge for the misery Jack caused him he had doubtless set fire to the buildings to ruin the boy by leaving him bankrupt.

Certain of this, Jack gave utterance to the cry:

"Bullock started the fires!"

Then hundreds kept a lookout for Bullock.

The strong wind fanned and fanned the flames, and a vivid glare flashed up to the heavens, mingled with clouds

after clouds of dense, grimy smoke, and still new fires continued to appear, until at last there was no possibility of the meager department hoping to cope with the conflagration.

It soon became evident that the strong wind would cause the destruction of the entire town, and people began the work of saving their possessions by carrying them out upon an adjacent hill, where the reservoir was situated.

By the time Jack reached the square in the center of the town the devastating ruin became apparent to him.

Unless something like a miracle occurred, it seemed certain that within an hour not a house would escape the ravaging tongues of flame then roaring and licking through the air, seeking to devour everything in their reach.

But an idea occurred to the boy, and as most of the people kept flocking toward the public square, and the town hall bell kept up a furious ringing, Jack mounted the steps of the pedestal that supported a statue in honor of his father.

"Out of the town, every one, and I will save your homes!" he cried, in loud, thrilling tones. "Up to the hills! Up to the hills!"

This cry was taken up and rang out on every side, and the terrified people hastened from the burning town, and flocked upon the hills in back of Wrightstown.

As the last of them were leaving, a crowd of men came rushing through the main street in pursuit of a half-naked man, who was brandishing a flaming fire-brand in his hand.

He was Tom Bullock, the man who set Wrightstown afire!

With wildest yells on they came, hurling showers of missiles after the fleeing wretch, and, hemming him in on all sides, they drove him into one of the burning buildings, where he perished.

As soon as the town was cleared of the last person, Jack called a dozen of the ablest men together, and, arming them with axes, he brought them up to the reservoir and yelled:

"Break away the gates and flood the town!"

A cheer pealed from every one at this suggestion, and shower after shower of lusty blows were rained upon the stout planks that impounded tons upon tons of water there.

The splintered chips flew in all directions, and plank after plank was burst through at one side, where a deep gully once had run a stream down to the town.

Then out gushed the water in torrents, watched by the anxious multitude of men, women and children, gathered about on the gloomy hillside, the ruddy glow of the fierce flames lighting up their pale faces with a strange radiance.

Soon the entire structure gave way, and with a bellowing roar, a hiss like a thousand steam pipes, and a fearful rush, the water went rolling down in vast volumes upon the burning town.

A tremendous cheer pealed from the anxious spectators.

They watched it burst upon the houses and bury them, when like a flash and with an awful dull roar, the flames suddenly vanished, an enormous mass of steam and smoke arose to the sky, and then a dense gloom settled down.

A deathly silence followed, for some of those wildly beating hearts knew that their homes must have been carried away by the avalanche, destroying all they had.

The water continued to roar and gurgle from the fast emptying reservoir, until at last it was all gone, and then the moon burst out from behind a slowly drifting cloud-bank.

One quarter of the houses in the town lay a burnt and charred mass of black ruins, some of the smaller ones were overturned, or washed away, caved in and broken down from their foundations, and everything was drenched and tumbled about in wild confusion.

It was a loss of thousands of dollars, it was the impoverishment of many a poor family, it meant a lot of work to bring it to a semblance of its former self, and yet, had Jack failed to send that flood down the entire place would have been burnt.

They slowly made their way back, and dispersed to look out for their respective belongings, and Jack, Tim and Fritz did the same.

Their places were strongly built of stone and brick, and withstood the avalanche better than any of the rest, and although the water had done some damage it did not amount to anything.

When the three met an hour later in Jack's house to compare notes, they considered themselves lucky.

Yet there was an anxious look on the boy inventor's face. "Most of my houses are gone, boys," he said sadly. "swear-

ing away my fortune at one swoop, and I have got but little left. Almost beggared, though, I do not despair. I have yet got a chance to win a stake from the Government, and I am going to do it by the help of heaven!"

CHAPTER V.

THE SMUGGLER.

Two weeks after the foregoing events occurred Jack had all his preparations made for a voyage to the Yellow Sea in the Mermaid.

His negotiations with the Secretary of War were concluded, and having a detailed description of the phantom ship, a letter of marque, and all necessary information, he embarked.

Tim and Fritz accompanied him, the young Dutchman carrying a handsome but evil-minded pet parrot, which he called Bismarck, and Tim dragging along a little red pet monkey named Whiskers.

All their businesses were left in the care of trusted superintendents, and they were all eager to get away.

It was a clear, cool day when the machinery was started and the boat shot across the bay, but they were not cheered off by all the town like they had been on other occasions, as the poor people were too sad and too busy now to make a festal day.

As soon as the catamaran got out in deep water, Jack set the course, and the Mermaid sped away southward along the coast, heading for the Gulf of Mexico, under Tim's guidance.

By nightfall they passed Sandy Hook, and saw several large ocean steamers coming from the port of New York, while in the distance another one was coming up the coast from the southward.

Jack, by this time, had relieved Fritz of the wheel, and while the Dutch boy, who was an expert electrician, went back in the battery room to examine the machinery, Tim kept a lookout.

"Anything gone wrong, Tim?" Jack asked.

"Thar's a skiff with one man in it athwart our bows," replied Tim.

"What are they doing so far from shore?"

"Keel haul me, if I know, sir."

"Ah! I see him now. He's got a lantern, swinging it."

"Ay, ay; an' by thunder thar burns a blue light on yonder incomin' steamer!"

"That's queer! Can the man in the boat be a harbor pilot?"

"I reckon not, 'cause they allers boards ships from their own wessels."

"What can that fellow's mysterious actions mean, then?"

"Might be jest as well to find out, Jack."

"I shall. Hold on, I'll stop the Mermaid and sink her a ways."

He turned lever No. 2, and the catamaran came to a pause.

Then he set the pumps in motion, compressing the air in the hulls, and the Mermaid settled down until half of the pilot-house was submerged, when Jack brought her to a pause.

Only a part of the turret now showed above water, and the divers could then see what transpired without being seen themselves.

Remaining stationary, they saw several more signals pass between the man in the boat and the people upon the approaching steamer, after which the lights were suddenly extinguished.

The twinkling lights on the steamship drew nearer every moment, and then the great vessel came abreast of where the man sat silently rocking in his boat.

Jack had his glance fixed upon the big vessel, and saw two men suddenly appear upon the upper deck aft. with several large bags which they rapidly tossed overboard.

The bags floated, as they were made of inflated rubber, and the steamer passed on, leaving a broad track of foam in her wake.

She was soon lost in the distance, and the solitary man in the boat thereupon pulled hastily over to the floating bags.

Making them fast, astern, by a tow-line, he resumed his oars and began to leisurely pull toward the Highlands.

"He's a smuggler!" exclaimed Jack, as the truth dawned upon him.

"Ay, now," replied Tim, who was very much interested and surprised at what had transpired, "an' I see that it's a Havana steamer."

"Then the bags must contain cigars. It is a clever scheme to cheat the U. S. customs duty, but I am going to spoil it for him."

"Are yer goin' fer ther lubber?" queried Tim.

"Of course I am," replied the boy, raising his boat to the surface.

He started her after the solitary boatman, and leaving the wheel in Tim's hands he took a rifle down from a rack on the wall, and seeing that it was loaded, he went out through the door at the side of the hull upon the narrow deck on the port side.

"Boat ahoy!" he shouted.

No reply came back, and Tim started the searchlight and turned its glaring rays full upon the smuggler.

He was as clearly revealed as if the sun shone upon him.

"Boat ahoy!" cried Jack again.

By this time the Mermaid was close to the other, and Tim brought her to a pause as the smuggler was resting on his oars.

"Ship ahoy!" replied the man, in gruff tones.

"Come aboard. We want you for smuggling!" said Jack.

Instead of obeying, the man started to row away.

"Haul to!" roared Jack, leveling his rifle at the man, "or I will fire!"

"Oh, don't shoot!" the man yelled back, in alarmed tones.

"Will you surrender?"

"No. I will give up the bags, though."

"We want you, too."

"Then you'll have to fight for me!" cried the smuggler.

And raising a big navy revolver, he began to blaze away at the boy, when Jack returned his fire.

The boy was unhurt, but his fire proved more effectual, for a ball struck the man and caused him to cry out with pain.

"Surrender, or you'll get the worst of it!" shouted Jack warningly.

"I'll die first!" replied the man grimly.

Then he opened a fusillade again, and fearful of his bullets breaking the glass Tim closed the metal shutters over the windows.

Such shots fell harmlessly against the two-inch plates of the aluminum hulls, however, and again Jack escaped being hit.

By this time the boatman had discharged every shot in his pistol without doing any harm, and he then cut the bags loose from his boat, resumed his oars, and was upon the point of rowing away when Jack shouted:

"If you don't haul to, it will be the worse for you!"

"Go to the deuce!" replied the smuggler defiantly.

"Look out, Jack, or you'll lose ther bags!" cried Tim warningly.

The boy glanced at them and saw that they were sinking.

"He has jabbed the bags with his knife and let the air out of them!" muttered Jack. "Head the boat for them, Tim!" he added aloud.

The old sailor obeyed, and as soon as it hove up to the sinking bags the boy took a boat hook down from a rack against the deckhouse, and, catching hold of them, he hauled them in.

Fritz ran out to his assistance, and between them they dragged the bags up on the deck of the Mermaid.

The smuggler by this time had placed considerable distance between himself and the catamaran, and when Jack looked for him again he saw that the man was heading for an approaching tugboat, which had come out of the distant harbor.

He began to shout to attract attention, and succeeded so well that the tug was headed toward him.

By the time the catamaran shot after him, he had met the tug and boarded her, leaving his boat towing astern.

"Dem must be his vriends," said Fritz, in disgust; "und mit dot dugpoat, und all dem vellers, he vhas got away alretty."

"It appears to me that they are not trying to escape," replied Jack, watching the tug keenly; "but they are coming this way."

"Den ve vhas haf a fight mit dem?" questioned Fritz delightedly.

"It seems so. At any rate, we will give them a hot reception."

"I dinks so, neider!" answered Fritz.

They watched the boat until it drew quite near.

"Why," said Jack, just then gaining a good look at the flag that was flying at the top of the pole, aft, "she's a revenue tug!"

Just then there came a hail from the boat.

"Haul to, there!"

"Ay, ay!" replied Jack cheerily.

Tim ran the catamaran alongside of the tug and the boy saw the smuggler standing on deck talking to several Custom House inspectors, and pointing at the Mermaid.

"It's a smuggler, I tell you!" the man was saying. "And the proof of it is those bags lying on her deck!"

"He is turning the tables by accusing us of his own villainy!" said Jack, in surprise. "He is an artful dodger, by jingo!"

"You say you saw some men, on the steamer that passed, heave those bags overboard and that he picked them up?" one of the officers demanded, in sharp, suspicious tones.

"That's it exactly," assented the smuggler. "If you examine the bags you will find what I tell you to be correct."

Two of the officers now boarded the Mermaid.

"We've got a charge of smuggling against you!" said one of them to Jack. "And are informed that the contents of those bags lying there is contraband. What have you to say for yourself, young fellow?"

"I have no doubt the bags are filled with smuggled cigars," replied Jack, "for we saw them heaved from the steamer and picked up by the man who accuses us to save himself. He is the real smuggler, and is deceiving you."

"There must be something wrong here," growled the officer; "at any rate, we will examine the contents of the bags, for from information furnished us in New York we were put on the track of this plan. An interested party gave the job away, and we came down here as soon as the steamer was sighted, to intercept the scheme. That's how we happen to be here."

He opened the bags.

They were filled with unstamped cigar boxes.

"Just as I suspected," remarked the officer.

"I hope you are satisfied I told the truth," said the smuggler, in tones of injured innocence. "I saw them pick the bags up!"

"Liar!" exclaimed Jack, a dark look crossing his face.

"You can arrest those men, and I'll swear to their guilt," the man continued coolly, pointing at Jack and his friend.

"Of course we will!" said the officer, who was anxious to arrest somebody; for although these officers often make a haul of smuggled things, they do not often catch the guilty parties.

"My dear fellow, you shall do nothing of the kind!" replied Jack, in angry tones. "Come into my cabin, and I will prove my innocence."

The officers glanced at each other, winked significantly, and followed Jack inside, when the boy produced his Government papers and showed them to the officers.

They merely laughed at such documents, as they could not understand such a mission as the boy was going on, and said contemptuously:

"Bosh! They are too ridiculous. We take no stock in them."

"What are you going to do about it, then?" asked Jack, frowning.

"Take you back to New York with us!" was the cold answer. "You may prove your innocence, but we doubt it."

"But I can't lose the time, and go through the bother——"

"But you will have to, that's all!" rejoined one of the men, shrugging his shoulders.

"Well, I won't!"

"You'll see! We will tow you back!"

And so saying the officers passed out on deck.

As soon as they were out of the Mermaid the boy saw that everything was in water-tight condition, and then said to Tim:

"Sink the catamaran, Topstay!"

The old sailor grinned and obeyed.

Down went the Mermaid beneath the waves a moment later, leaving the two astonished officers and the bags floundering on the surface of the sea.

CHAPTER VI.

BENEATH THE ATLANTIC.

Tim sank the Mermaid fifty feet before he brought her to a pause, and then turned on all the electric lights, flooding the water with an effulgence of light that streamed in all directions.

The halo coming from the deadlights illumined a broad belt around the boat, and the rays of the searchlight penetrated to the distance of a mile ahead, showing everything as clearly defined as if by day.

They were in a wonderful place, looking not unlike the abode of some monster of another world, for they were near the bottom.

Off on the port side there arose a grandly sweeping sand hill of Romer's Reef, which gleamed and glittered and rose to within a short distance of the surface, its bar causing the big ocean cruisers no end of trouble at low tide.

On the starboard side was a mass of rugged rocks worn by a deep gully as smooth as glass by incoming and outgoing tides that sweep continually with such force around the bend into New York Bay.

Various kinds of fishes were swimming about, clusters of seaweed drifted by, and water-logged planks shifted sluggishly along the debris deposited upon the bottom.

Diverging currents ran in different directions, and many a jagged rock rose here and there, threatening ships if the tide became very low.

Tim started the catamaran ahead at about fifteen knots, and kept his good eye fixed upon the compass, for it was just as easy to navigate the Mermaid below as it was on the surface.

It was some time since our friends had seen any marine mysteries exposed to their view, and they drank in the scene with eager avidity.

The configuration of the bottom changed continually as they forged ahead.

Sometimes it arose abruptly ahead, causing Tim to start the propellers on the bars aft, which raised the boat without emptying her of water; then there came a sudden descent, whereupon the propellers were reversed, driving the catamaran down again.

Tremendous chasms yawned below them in places miles in depth, submarine cliffs hedged them into vast gorges through which they shot, and mountains arose on all sides.

In fact, the outlines of the bed of the sea consisted of plains, mountains, valleys and rugged hills, exactly like the surface of the land; plants and aquatic animals grew there as they do on terra firma, and the only difference was that they breathed and lived on the water, while terrestrial creatures and vegetation live on air.

As soon as Fritz became tired of the view he went back into the galley, as he was an excellent cook, and having prepared a tasteful supper, he laid it on the cabin table and called his friends.

Tim brought the boat to a pause and smiled with anticipation, for he was as hungry as he could be, on account of the supper being delayed.

"Hello, club foot, how's yer game eye?" yelled an eldritch voice as he entered.

Tim scowled, for he was very sensitive over his glass optic and wooden peg, and glaring barefully at Bismarck, the parrot, who accosted him, he shook his fist at it, as it perched on the back of a chair, and growled:

"Belay, thar, yer lubber, or I'll twist yer figger head fer bein' so cussed cheeky!"

"Rats!" retorted the parrot, and it followed up this contemptuous adjective by such a volley of swearing at Tim that even the old sailor was shamed.

"Come, Tim, sit down," remonstrated Jack, with a grin, as the irate old sea dog began to swear back at the bird. "Supper's getting cold."

"I dink dot barrot vhas know vot he vhas shpoken aboutt vonct," chuckled Fritz, who had taught his bird its indecent vocabulary.

"Aw, stow yer jawin'-tackle!" growled Tim. "If yer'd a taught that ere lubber of a bird as much as I've taught Whiskers, yer might have somethin' ter be proud on, an'—oh!—ouch! Wot in thunder's this?"

He sat down hard in the chair, as was his custom, on account of his wooden leg, and there came a squashing noise, as the contents of a custard pie flew all over him.

A roar of laughter from Fritz attested to the fact that he had put the pie there, and it made Tim mad, for he and

Fritz were forever playing practical jokes upon each other whenever they had an opportunity.

"Och, great heavens!" roared the young Dutchman, screaming with laughter. "Vot you doin' now, alretty?"

"You done this, you swab!" bellowed Tim, arising with surprising alacrity, the seat of his pants emblazoned with pie-stuffing; and he grabbed a dish full of biscuits and let them fly at his tormentor.

Fritz strove to dodge the flying missiles, but failed, and as soon as they were gone Tim continued to bombard him with the leg of mutton, a dish of boiled potatoes, and was following them up with the crockery and glassware, when Jack yelled:

"Stop! Stop, Tim, for heaven's sake, or we won't get any supper!"

The latter warning succeeded in calming the old sailor quicker than Jack could have done it with a loaded shotgun, and as Fritz was getting much the worst of the row, he was glad to quit.

He cleaned himself with a towel, the half-demolished supper was saved, and peace was restored for a while, when they pitched into the food.

Under the glowing influence of a full stomach and a glass of grog, the old sailor's good humor was restored, and he smiled blandly again.

"I wonder how those officers got out of the mess we left them in?" asked Jack, with a broad grin, as he recalled the inspector's situation.

"I oxbect dot dey vhas got vetter as Dim vhas," chuckled Fritz.

"Oh, their messmates 'll pick 'em up," said the old sailor, giving the Dutchman a kick on the shin under the table. "When I wuz aboard o' ther frigate Wabash, I onct had a run-in wi' ther mate, an' though he weighed nigh onter three hundred poun's, I picked him up wi' one hand, an' chucked him overboard——"

"Vun hand?" grinned Fritz.

"Aye, one hand! I had a powerful muscle in them days. It was a dark night, an' the ship wuz two hundred miles from land, but as he couldn't swim, an' the ship went on, I sprang overboard an' ketched him. Holdin' him up wi' one hand, I struck out wi' ther other, and reached land——"

"Two hundred miles off?" queried Jack blandly.

"Aye, aye, lad; an'——"

"Wot! Don't yer believe it?" growled Tim, glaring murderously at Bismarck.

"To tell you the truth, I don't," flatly answered the boy.

"Well," said Tim, as a grin came over his rugged face, "neither do I."

By this time the meal was finished, and a short time afterward Jack and Tim turned in, leaving Fritz to navigate the boat.

By the following morning they were off Cape Hatteras, still under the sea, and the regular routine work went on when the Mermaid shot over to the Gulf Stream and followed its edge to the southward, the warm water of its orange current making a perceptible difference in the temperature of the boat.

Happening to glance out astern, Jack saw a tiny pilot-fish close to the hull, and recognizing what it was, he looked rather and beheld a large shark following in the wake of the boat.

"That's a bad omen," he exclaimed involuntarily.

"Wot's that?" demanded Tim, who, like most sailors, was very superstitious.

"Don't you see the shark following us?"

"Good heavens! One of us is a-goin' ter die, sure pop. It's a sure sign if one o' them critters keeps on in our wake!"

"If there's bound to be a death, then," said Jack grimly, "it ought to be that sea cannibal to pass in his chips, and I'll make him; swing the boat around, Tim."

The old sailor turned the catamaran, and Jack took a cartridge from a box, the projectile of which was filled with a high explosive invented by the boy.

The breech of the pneumatic gun was in the pilot house, and opening it, Jack thrust the cartridge into the already loaded gun.

By that time, the Mermaid had turned around, and was facing the shark, when Jack sighted the gun and turned a lever discharging it.

There was no report, but a thud.

With lightning-like rapidity the projectile was hurled through the water, and striking the shark, it burst and blew it to fragments.

"That settles his life!" said the young inventor.

Tim turned the boat around, and they continued ahead.

Two days thus passed by, and they arose to the surface to take an observation, when Jack found they were off the coast of Florida, in plain sight of Rubicon Light, close to the Mexican gulf.

It was late in the afternoon, and as the boat was going by the numerous coral reefs lining the shore, our friends were startled by hearing a cry.

"Help! Help!" came the appealing voice.

"Hello!" exclaimed Jack, with a start. "Some one is in distress."

"Vere dot voice come from?" anxiously asked Fritz, gazing around.

"Shiver me, lads, but thar he is now," said Tim excitedly.

He pointed toward a small skiff containing a boy, who was evidently without oars, standing up in the boat shouting to them.

The boat he was in seemed to be moving in behind the reefs with the tide, and they heard a hollow, gurgling roar rising above the din of the surf beating in upon the white, sandy beach beyond.

"He has lost his oars and can't manage the boat," said Jack. "Let us go over and put the poor fellow ashore."

He turned the catamaran toward the wildly shouting boy, and just then his skiff disappeared behind the reefs.

"Thar must be a strong tide among them 'ere reefs," remarked Tim.

Just then more frantic cries than before reached them.

"Help! Hurry—hurry—or I am lost!" was the despairing cry.

Jack started, and an anxious look crossed his face.

"He must have got into some fresh trouble!" he muttered.

He put on more power, and the Mermaid dashed ahead faster, and presently reached the reefs.

There was an opening between two of them, and heading the catamaran for it, Jack drove it through.

CHAPTER VII.

DOWN IN THE WHIRLPOOL.

As the Mermaid went around in back of the reef the divers saw that the boy's boat had capsized, and was floating away keel upward, while the boy was swimming in the water.

He looked as if he was half exhausted and unable to bear up much longer, while to their astonishment they saw that the current had now augmented its strength so much that it was carrying him along with it with extraordinary velocity.

The dull, gurgling noise they had at first heard now roared with a deafening sound, and they felt the Mermaid go sweeping along with great speed, caught by the same current that grasped the boy.

This strange tide ran into a large opening in the face of one of the reefs, and the boy was being carried rapidly toward it, when his body suddenly sank from sight.

A despairing cry pealed from his lips.

They watched for him to reappear, but he did not come up.

"He is drowned," said Jack pityingly.

"Poor leetle chap!" muttered Tim.

"Can't ve dife for him?" queried Fritz, in anxious tones.

"No; his body by this time must be swept into yonder opening in the reef," replied Jack, pointing ahead, "and we couldn't find it."

"Aye," said Tim, "an' in one minute we'll be in thar, too, lad."

"Turn the boat aside!" exclaimed Jack. "Get her out of this current."

"I can't; ther current is holdin' it like fury."

"Dot dunder comes oudt of dot hole in de reef, too," said Fritz.

"That's strange; the current must be awful strong, Tim."

"Aye, lad, it is. If I turn ther Mermaid she sweeps along sideways, an' 'll bang again ther reef. Better ter go on bow fust, an' go through ther openin', fer ther current, o' course, must come out on ther other side somewheres."

"Very well," assented Jack.

Tim straightened the boat to the current, and it shot

ahead with amazing force again, straight toward the hole in the reef.

A moment afterward it plunged in, bow foremost and Jack looked around in the gloom, and exclaimed after a moment:

"I don't see any outlet for the current, boys."

"Dash it, that's queer!" said the perplexed Tim.

"Wait, und I strike a light," said Fritz, turning on the electric lights.

They dispelled the gloom, but showed no outlet.

Such a fearful roar of continuous thunder filled the big cavern into which they had now plunged that they were nearly deafened.

The water was lashed to foam, and they saw it go whirling around in a vast wheel, with a funnel-shaped opening in the center.

"It's a whirlpool!" exclaimed Jack, utterly aghast.

Caught in the irresistible current, the catamaran now went gyrating around with long sweeps in a circle.

The entire interior of the reef was hollow, and not a ray of daylight penetrated the vast water cavern.

"We must try to get out to the entrance again!" shouted Jack, to make himself heard. "Don't you feel how the whirlpool is sucking us down in its vortex?"

The boat was still sweeping around, but the circles were rapidly narrowing, as the catamaran was steadily drawn toward the center of the raging, foamy waters.

"I'll do ther best I kin, lad," replied Tim, turning pale, for he saw that the power of the current was far stronger than that of the boat, despite the strength of its flying propellers.

He turned on full speed and steered the Mermaid for the opening into which they had been dashed, but the boat could not diverge from the course which the water regulated any more than to present a broadside to the tide, and continue going around in that direction.

"Shiminey!" gasped Fritz, who was looking on with distended eyes. "Dot vhas awful! She don't been able to do dot!"

He told the truth.

Tim's rugged face was as white as a sheet now, and he turned despairingly to Jack and groaned:

"Tain't no use, lad; we can't get out!"

"Very well, then," coolly answered the inventor. "We will stay in here, then. Don't despair. See all the water that comes in here? It don't fill up the cavern. Consequently, it has an outlet. We must go out with it if there is any possibility of doing so."

"Aye, but d'yer mean ter go down in the whirlpool?"

"If we don't go voluntarily, the current will suck the boat down, anyway," replied Jack undauntedly. "Let's take the devil by the horns. It may grind us to pieces, but there is no alternative."

"Werry good, an' may ther Lord help us poor sinners!" cried Tim.

"Fritz, is everything closed up?"

"Yah!" replied the young Dutchman, after an inspection.

Jack looked at the indicators on the switchboard, and saw that not a great deal of air was registered as being in the boat, yet there was enough to last about seventy hours.

He then took the wheel.

The fast-narrowing current by this time had almost pulled the Mermaid within its revolving axis, when Jack sunk the boat straight into it, the bow going down at an abrupt angle.

Down she shot, and then began to spin around, and glancing out the window, the alarmed trio saw that the water all around them was boiling, bubbling and foaming with the excessive agitation of its rapid descent and great volume.

Down, down, down they were plunged in the seething mass, unable, despite the lights, to see where they were going, their nerves on edge with expectation of momentarily striking a hard bottom or projecting rock.

The time, although but minutes, seemed years of anxious suspense, and then there came a feeling as if they were going straight through the earth.

Each of the trio was clinging to the supports nearest to him, for to let go meant being thrown down.

Had there been a solitary article within the boat that was not stationary, it would have been broken or else might have crashed through the glass and filled the boat with water.

But Jack had been taught by former experience to be careful not to leave anything unfastened, and therefore suffered no injury.

Suddenly, and without warning, there came a change, for the tunnel into which they had been plunged now began to have more of a slant, and presently ran along so that the boat was enabled to float upon level keels again.

The three friends felt a deep sense of relief.

Moreover, the fearful din created by the whirlpool was fast dying away in the distance, and although it left their ears ringing, they could hear each other talk.

The boat was flying along at a greater speed than she was capable of being driven by her own machinery, and as Jack glanced at the patent log gauge, he saw that they were tearing through the tunnel at the fearful speed of over fifty miles an hour!

Presently the water became clearer, too, and as the brilliant light of the electricity penetrated the water they saw that the tunnel they were in was at least fifty feet wide and equally as high.

The sides, floor and roof were necessarily worn as smooth as glass by the swift current, and as mile after mile was covered, they noticed that their speed kept steadily diminishing.

Several hours thus passed by, and by keeping hold of the wheel Jack kept the boat steady and straight in the middle of the tunnel.

"By jingo! will we ever get out of this place?" he exclaimed.

"Thar must be an outlet somewheres!" vaguely suggested Tim.

"I subbose dot, ve vhas on de vay to Shina," said Fritz.

"If we are encased within a submarine reef, it must be as great a marvel as the barrier reef on the northeast coast of Australia," said Jack; "and there can be no doubt but what it is some such a formation, for you can see for yourselves that the walls are made of rock, coral or something similar."

"Vot direction ve vhas going by?" queried Fritz.

"Southwest," replied Jack, looking at the compass. "We have been traveling five hours now at the rate of fifty miles an hour, and the result is, as we are driving straight under the Gulf of Mexico, that we are two hundred and fifty miles from Florida."

"That'd bring us about in ther Channel o' Yucatan, off Cape San Antonio, on ther west coa' o' Cuby," said Tim.

"And if we keep straight ahead we will come out in the Bay of Honduras," added Jack, "in Northern Central America. I am not surprised at finding such a channel here under water, for this neighborhood is volcanic. Only one thing troubles me."

"An' wot may that be?" anxiously asked the old salt.

"If we come out of this channel in very deep water, say one or two thousand feet under the gulf, the enormous pressure will be so great that the boat will instantly be crushed as flat as a pancake, and we will perish like a flash!"

This fearful, unthought-of possibility frightened Tim and Fritz, and glum looks stole over their faces at the prospect.

"Vot's to be done vonct?" queried the Dutch boy helplessly.

"Nothing," replied Jack. "Our fate is in the hands of a higher power than our own. See, the current is now almost gone, and we are merely advancing now by our own power."

They glanced out and saw that he was not mistaken.

But they saw something else, and cried out with fear.

"Looker thar, Jack, looker thar, lad!" cried Tim, in horror, as he pointed ahead and bent a despairing glance at the boy.

A chill of alarm shot through the boy as he peered ahead and saw the cause of his companion's agitation.

CHAPTER VIII.

DYING FOR AIR.

Fritz and Tim had not become unnecessarily alarmed, Jack saw, for there was a solid wall shutting off the passage ahead, against which the Mermaid threatened to dash.

If once it struck, the boat might be broken to pieces.

As quick as a flash Jack stopped the boat, reversed the propellers, and the Mermaid came to a pause close to the wall.

There was no current here, but they saw that the passage abruptly bent to the left, and the length of the boat precluded the possibility of getting around into the bend.

To go back was impossible, as the whirlpool, over 250 miles back, would not give them egress, and as they had consumed nearly six hours out of the twenty hours' supply of air on hand, it seemed as if they would perish like rats in a trap!

How much longer this passage in the submarine reef under the gulf extended they had no means of ascertaining, but if, as Jack said, they emerged in very deep water, it was likely they would perish from the pressure.

"We have got to get around that bend!" exclaimed Jack, "for it must have an outlet, for the water in here is the only means by which we can hope to escape."

"Ay, lad!" groaned Tim mournfully; "but how'll we round it?"

"We must blow the edge off with our gun!"

"I dink so, neider," said Fritz.

Jack backed the boat away from the bend, and putting a cartridge in the gun, he aimed at the corner of the bend and fired.

The projectile struck the rock, and there came a fearful agitation of the water, followed by a violent concussion.

For a few moments the water was boiling and frothy, but when it cleared, Jack saw that a huge piece had been rent from the wall he aimed at.

The broken rock was shivered to fragments that now covered the bottom of the passage.

"The opening is plenty big enough now to let the Mermaid pass through," said he to his friends, and he started the boat forward.

The catamaran passed around the bend, which sloped abruptly upward, and after an hour the boat passed out of it.

Jack glanced at the gauge and saw that it only indicated a depth of forty-two feet of water, by which he realized that they must be near land, and he sent the boat to the surface.

His surmise was correct, for they were only a few miles from the most western coast of the island of Cuba.

The surface of the sea was as smooth as glass, but the sky wore a most scowling aspect, and as Jack pointed up at it he remarked:

"There's a black squall coming from the northeast—do you see it?"

"Better go down below ag'in ter escape it," advised Tim.

Jack sent the boat down twenty feet and put on full speed.

This had hardly been done when there sounded a sudden report that rang like a pistol shot through the submarine boat, and the wheel swung to and fro in Jack's hands.

The three navigators were astounded.

"In heaven's name, what was that?" gasped Jack.

"I reckon as somethin' busted," replied Tim, in alarm.

"See here. The rudders don't work properly!"

"Vot can it be?" demanded Fritz.

"Mind the wheel, and I'll see," answered the boy.

He dashed back into the engine-room and closely examined the wires, all of which he found lying in a tangled mass.

They had become twisted around the rudder lines.

He saw at a glance that the support that held them in place at a high tension had become weakened and burst from the wall, tearing out the screws and breaking part of the woodwork.

There was a speaking-tube in the room, and Jack shouted through it:

"Shut off the power, Tim, quick!"

After a moment the old sailor yelled back:

"I've did it, lad; but she won't stop!"

"Here's a fix!" gasped Jack, in alarm.

"Vot's der matter?" shouted Fritz, through the tube.

"The wires have fallen, and all control over the boat is lost, as they are in contact and are tangled in the rudder lines as well."

"Wot's ter be did?" yelled Tim.

"Leave Fritz in there and you come here and help me undo them."

In came the old sailor, stumping as fast as he could, while the Mermaid continued to rush on through the water.

He uttered an exclamation of alarm when he saw in what a ruinous condition the wires were, and gasped:

"How'r we ever a-goin' ter undo them 'ere wires while they're chock-full o' electricity, lad—it can't be did?"

"Put on a pair of rubber gloves. I'm afraid it will be a long job, as there are a great many wires, and each one separately has got to be fastened up. Look out you don't get shocked!"

They put on the gloves, and Jack got his tools out, whereupon they began their arduous task; and presently saw that some of the rubber insulation had been broken from some of the wires, causing the current to flow from one wire into the other.

This was what caused the loss of individual power in each wire.

Several hours passed by before they finally completed their task, and in the meantime the boat had been forced to keep on in a southwesterly direction until the rudder lines were untangled from the other wires.

Finally, however, everything was in proper order again, and they returned to the pilot-house, when Fritz met them with a blanched face and a startling piece of intelligence.

"I vhas shut off de bower," said he, in frightened tones, "but, by Shiminy, ve vhas got in a stronger tide as never vhas, und id holt us down here und shwept us along faster as ve nefer vent before alretty!"

Jack glanced at the lever and saw that the propellers were not working, yet the Mermaid was tearing along with appalling speed, and seemed to be getting sucked down lower in the depths.

In fact, a glance at the indicator showed that they were now sixty feet below the surface, and he saw by the way the water was rushing along that they were in a furious current.

The boy made no effort to steer the boat, but found that the pressure of the strange and powerful submarine current held the rudder blades almost as rigid as if they were bolted.

It was clearly impossible to get out of the awful current, and Jack presently came to the conclusion to grade the boat to suit it, and let it sweep them along till it became weaker, when they might have a chance to get out of it.

"We are going straight toward Honduras!" said the boy, "and if this fearful current continues to keep us swinging along at this rate much longer we are bound to run ashore!"

"Is thar any danger?" queried Tim.

"None whatever, until we get within the shore line, when we may go crashing against some sunken rocks!"

"Den vot ve do about id?" asked Fritz, pulling a long face.

"We can't do anything at present. Don't you see we can't go up, down, or right or left? If I pump all the water ballast out of the boat, the tide may keep her submerged, and the weight of the water might crush the hulls."

There was nothing for it now but to wait, and several hours more passed by, when suddenly Jack noticed a smothering sensation in the air, and glanced at one of the indicators.

"By heavens, boys," he startled his companions with, "do you know that we failed to pump in more air while on the surface, and that there are not more than a thousand cubic feet of it left? Within less than half an hour we will use it all up, and if we don't get more we'll smother!"

"Good Lor'!" gasped Tim, with a start. "Raise the boat!"

"I can't! She won't ascend!" despairingly answered Jack.

"Und looker dere!" yelled Fritz, pointing ahead. "Vot's dot?"

"Why—we are plunging into a passage this current flows through," said Jack, as the boat went into another dark, wide tunnel.

"Ay, now," groaned Tim, "an' if yer wants ter go ter ther surface for air, yer can't do it till we gits out o' here."

They were cooped up like rats in a trap.

A thrill of terror passed over them, and every moment the smothering feeling intensified, until at last it became so difficult to breathe that they began to suffer agony.

Along rushed the boat at a furious rate of speed.

It was useless to try to guide her now, and they let her take her course through the gloomy tunnel they were then in.

On, on, they went, and they eagerly looked ahead for the end of it, but saw nothing; and with a gasping cry Fritz fell to the floor, laboring hard for breath.

Tim was choking.

"I—can't—stand—this—much—longer, lad!" he gasped.

"Heaven help us!" groaned Jack. "What shall I do?"

"Belay, Jack! don't yer—"

But ere poor Tim could finish the sentence he fell in a heap on the floor beside the half-senseless Dutch boy.

Jack felt faint, sick and dizzy.

He could not bear up much longer himself, but staggered back, his brain in a whirl.

"The air in the hulls!" he shrieked. "If we can get it, maybe——"

He staggered over to the levers and reached out to grasp one when his senses began to suddenly fail him.

He fell, grasping the lever, and the boat rushed on with its insensible crew, through the dark passage going—where?

CHAPTER IX.

THE PHANTOM SHIP.

"Fritz! Tim Get up! Get up!"

"Eh, lad? What is it? Whar am I?"

"We are saved—saved—saved!"

Tim got upon his feet, and rubbed his eyes, for sunlight was streaming in upon him, but Fritz laid like a log where he had fallen, heavily breathing, and Jack flung open a window.

The cool air rushing in revived them all, and the Dutch boy was as much amazed as the rest to find himself alive.

"But how did this happen?" demanded Tim, in amazement.

"I fainted, too," said Jack, "but I remembered the air in the hulls and opened a lever letting it come up here before my senses left me. I revived a few minutes ago, and here we were upon the surface. The Lord only knows how we got here, though."

"But where ve vhas?" queried Fritz.

"I have no idea. There's no land in sight anywhere. Tim, it is just noon. Can't you take an observation of the sun and ascertain our position?" queried the puzzled boy.

The old sailor nodded, and fulfilled this request.

He made a startling reckoning.

"Blast me!" he exclaimed, "this can't be right!"

"What is it?" queried Jack curiously.

"'Cordin' ter my figgers, we're in ther Pacific Ocean."

"In der Pacific?" skeptically asked Fritz.

"Ay, ay; an' no more'n forty miles off Guatemala!"

They all looked very much astonished, and Jack cried:

"By jingo, I see through it now!"

"Vot iss?" demanded Fritz.

"The passage we came through must have carried us under Central America from the Bay of Honduras."

This suggestion was startling, but there could have been no other way for them to have got there.

"It must be that 'ere way!" said Tim.

"Then we are saved a long cruise around South America to get here" said Jack. "Our misfortune has repaid us for all the trouble we underwent. By Jove! though, it is surprising!"

"Ain't dot Mermaid hurted none?" queried Fritz.

"You had better examine her and see."

Tim and Fritz did so, but the most careful inspection failed to show the least sign of damage, and they all rejoiced.

The boat was then headed northward, high pressure put on, and several days' travel brought them to the Sandwich Islands, where they found there could be no mistake in Tim's calculation.

From there a bee-line was made for the Ladrone Islands, which they reached without adventure in due time, and following the regular course of ships, they headed northward for the coast of China, and soon brought themselves in sight of it.

"This is a dangerous location, Tim," said Jack. "The place is swarming with Malay pirates, and I expect we will have a brush with them ere many days are past."

He sat in the cabin talking to the old sailor, early in the evening.

"D'yer know, it's my idea, as this 'ere phantom ship o' ther Yaller Sea ain't nuthin' more'n a pirate," said Tim.

"Why do you think so?" queried the boy, in surprise.

"Cause don't that ghost ship scuttle every one as it fouls?"

"Yes—to all accounts, they are all sunk."

"And don't ther crews take ter ther boats?"

"Invariably."

"An' ain't ther Yaller Sea shallow in most places?"

"Yes."

"Then can't yer see through ther game? As soon's this 'ere phantom ship sinks a craft, it wanishes. But I'll bet it comes back ag'in, an' they steals everything in the sunken ships wot can't go down in such deep water as not ter leave part of her sticks outer water showin' whar she lies."

"You intimate that divers board her?"

"Wot's more likely 'n that, as ther men along ther coast an' on these 'ere islands is all good divers?"

"That's a good theory," admitted Jack, "and it does away with the ghostly part of the business. Still, we can't form any opinion on that score until we see this apparition."

Just then there came a shout from Fritz, who stood in the pilot house steering the boat.

"Sail-ho! Sail-ho!" cried he.

"Where away?" asked Jack, running into the pilot house.

"Athwart our bow."

"What do you make her out?"

"A full-ricked ship."

"Ah, yes—there she stands, almost hull down on the horizon."

"Und she vhas goin' our vhay," said Fritz.

"Sure enough. Increase our speed to thirty knots."

"Vhas ve goin' to owerhaul dot?" asked Fritz, complying.

"Yes," replied Jack, watching the catamaran darting ahead over the rolling swell. "She looks like an American freighter to me, and if she is going to Canton, she may offer us an example of this ghostly ship's prowess. At any rate, we can find out soon."

Tim had followed him in, and now pointed ahead to the right, and exclaimed:

"There's the headland o' Nippon islan' now."

"Then Formosa must be off to the port there?"

"Aye, lad, aye. I know this place precious well, 'cause I've cruised these 'ere waters in years gone by when yer couldn't sail fifty fathoms in any direction without runnin' inter Chinese junks loaded down ter ther water's edge wi' pirates."

"Och, gif us a rest!" growled Fritz, in disgust. "You make me fatigued!"

Tim grinned, and the boat rapidly overhauled the ship.

Upon a nearer approach, they found it to be a full-rigged ship of about eight hundred tons, named the Mary Scott.

As Fritz ran the Mermaid up alongside of her, Jack went out of a door upon the deck and gave the watch a hail.

"Ship ahoy!"

His voice was unexpected and created great excitement on board, as no one had seen the silent approach of the catamaran.

Every one of the watch on deck rushed to the side and peered over the bulwarks down upon the Mermaid.

"Boat ahoy!" came the answering cry.

"Fling me a line. I want to board your craft," said Jack.

"Where do you hail from, and where are you bound?"

"New York, and we are going to the Yellow Sea."

"Stand by, and we'll heave you a tow line."

"All ready," cried Jack.

One of the sailors had a line coiled in his hand, and he flung it for the Mermaid with unerring precision.

Jack caught the rope, and made the end fast to a stanchion, when Fritz ran the catamaran in under the ship's stern, and as soon as the hawser was made fast to the vessel an accommodation ladder was let down over the taffrail.

The boy ascended it to the deck of the ship.

By this time the officer of the watch had summoned the captain, and as soon as Jack set foot on the deck of the Mary Scott he was met by the skipper.

There was a look of curiosity upon the officer's face, and as he saluted the young diver, he exclaimed:

"Well, this is a surprise! Do you mean to say you have traveled all the way here from New York in that little boat?"

"Yes, sir. It is a submarine torpedo boat," replied the boy.

"Oh!" said Captain Bunsby, the skipper, as he introduced himself and learned Jack's name, "that accounts for it. I've heard of you in the newspapers. Therefore, I'm not surprised. It pleases me to know you, Jack Wright. But what in thunder are you doing in this out-of-the-way spot on the ocean with your boat, may I ask?"

"I am deputed by the Government to scour the Yellow Sea in search of the phantom ship which has caused our merchant marine so much trouble," replied the boy. "and I have

come aboard to learn whether you know anything about that singular craft or not?"

A grave expression crossed the skipper's rugged face.

"Yes," he exclaimed emphatically, "it is no myth, I'll swear to that. For I've seen it run into a ship and sink it; then it vanished as if it had been swallowed up by the sea."

"And what does this spectral vessel look like?"

"A cloud—a white vision—a full-rigged ship, not unlike this one, and its outlines are apparently transparent."

"Are you bound for China?"

"I am going to Canton and Hong-Kong."

"Then perhaps we may encounter this mysterious——"

"Ship ahoy!" yelled the lookout just then, interrupting him.

"Where away?" demanded the captain, looking around.

A chorus of yells arose from the crew at this juncture, and Jack gave a violent start just then himself.

"The phantom ship!" yelled one of the watch.

Every one was gazing off to the windward in speechless horror, and there beheld a large, spectral vessel of pure white gliding across the sea, clearly outlined against the darkening sky.

It glided along with a slow but stately motion, and then swung off toward the Mary Scott, caught the wind free, and then shot ahead like an arrow as if it would run the ship down.

CHAPTER X.

THE CHINESE PIRATE.

Every one was held spellbound by the sight of the phantom ship, for they expected that it would keep up its reputation and run them down, sinking them on the spot.

The spectral-looking vessel kept on a short distance, and then suddenly seemed to collapse and disappear.

That broke the enchantment holding everybody.

Sighs of intense relief burst involuntarily from every man.

"It's gone!" was the cry that ran from lip to lip.

The skipper clutched Jack excitedly by the arm.

"Did you see it?" he cried hoarsely.

"Yes," replied the boy, who was very much surprised.

"Now do you doubt its existence?"

"No. I am convinced."

"Isn't it as ghostly as anything you ever saw?"

"I must admit that it is," replied Jack, and he did not marvel at the superstitious fear of the men.

He peered ahead at the spot where the strange vessel had vanished, and saw nothing but the heaving waves and a low wall of mist, common in those latitudes, hovering over the water; but the wind soon whirled it away.

Jack was puzzled.

He was not superstitious, yet he had just seen the nearest semblance to a supernatural agency he had ever heard of.

How could it practically be accounted for?

"See here?" said Captain Bunsby, in troubled tones.

"What do you want?" queried the boy.

"Do you know what our view of the spectre means?"

"No."

"Well, I do: It's an omen of bad luck."

"Nonsense!"

"Oh, you'll see. It means disaster for us, as sure as fate."

"Why do you think so?"

"There was never a ship's crew yet in these accursed haunted waters that saw the phantom ship approaching but what some direful misfortune befell them ere their cruise was over."

"You mean that the phantom appears as a forewarning that it is liable to run them down at any moment?"

"Exactly so. We have been warned. Let us now beware. I am sure we are doomed. Death stares us squarely in the face. I did not want to make this trip for the ship owners. I felt an apprehension that we'd get into trouble. Now, you see, I was not wrong in my calculation. But they pooh-poohed my fear, and laughed me to such scorn that in sheer desperation their taunts drove me to venture over the Pacific for a last cargo of tea and coffee, when my freight is discharged."

"My dear friend, do you forget my mission here?" asked Jack, with a smile. "Recollect that I am going to accompany you as a bodyguard, and shall let no harm befall you."

The skipper shook his head dubiously.

"Pleasant as your assurance is," said he, "it doesn't rid me of my terror. I shall expect nothing now but the loss of my ship."

"We shall see," grimly replied Jack. "Where are you going first?"

"To Shanghai."

"Very well. Sail ahead. We shall follow you. Have no fear," and so saying Jack returned to his own boat, and they cast off the hawser and drifted astern of the Mary Scott.

"Did you see the phantom ship, boys?" queried Jack of his messmates, when he joined them in the pilot house.

"No," replied Tim and Fritz in chorus.

The boy thereupon told them about it, causing his friends the utmost astonishment, and then added:

"As I am convinced that there is something in this, I am sure we'll have our hands full capturing it."

"Capturin' it?" echoed Tim. "Why, blast it, lad, how are yer a-goin' ter capture a spook, I'd like ter know?"

"My dear fellow," replied Jack, "it wasn't a ghost. I don't believe in such things. It certainly had a spectral look; but appearances are deceitful sometimes. In fact, if it was not an optical delusion, I am convinced that this spirit ship is very material."

Fritz passed no opinion, and they let the matter drop.

The night passed away without any signs of the strange ship, and our friends kept an even distance between themselves and the Mary Scott, which, by daybreak, reached the entrance to the Yellow Sea.

Jack had sunk the Mermaid below the water until nothing but the upper part of her wheel-house protruded above the waves.

She was therefore invisible to the crew of the Mary Scott, although our friends could plainly see the big ship.

An early breakfast was partaken of, and just as the gray dawn was breaking before the rise of the big red sun, Jack descried a sail putting out from the Chinese coast.

Tim and Fritz were in the pilot-house with him, and the old sailor leveled a binocular at the approaching sail, and said:

"It's a big junk, Jack."

"Heading toward the Mary Scott?"

"Aye, lad; an' there's only a cupful of wind they're rowin' in."

"Can you see the Mongolian's crew?"

"Plainly—an' keelhaul me if thar ain't scores o' them!"

"Armed?"

"To ther teeth."

"Depend upon it, then, it's a Chinese pirate."

"Jest my idee."

"Fritz, put a cartridge in the gun."

"Yah!" replied the Dutch boy, obeying.

The ship was about one mile in advance of the catamaran, and the junk an equal distance beyond.

It was a vessel of large dimensions, with a high fore-castle and poopdeck, with three masts and bat-wing sails, while between decks were rows of open portholes from which protruded the muzzles of some heavy calibre, old-fashioned guns.

The crew had got out some long sweeps, with which they were propelling the clumsy craft along, as the wind scarcely bulged the sails, and the divers saw that there was a suspiciously large crew on board, all of whom were watching the Mary Scott.

Indeed, all doubt about the character of the junk was soon set at rest, when there came a discharge of a gun from its upper deck, and a ball went flying across the water toward the American ship, and passed clear over it.

"That settles it," said Jack. "She's a pirate!"

"Haven't dem Yankees got some cannons vonct?" asked Fritz.

"Nothing but a little, old brass salute gun."

"Den if ve vhasn'd here alretty, dem Shinamans vhas plow dent all mit pieces somedimes, don'd id?"

"We will give the beggars a surprise," said Jack. "Luff up, Fritz, until I get a sight on the gun, and raise her to the surface."

Fritz brought the bow around, and setting the pumps in motion, he raised the catamaran to the top.

Jack then aimed the pneumatic gun at the pirate.

"Watch the junk!" he exclaimed. "With one shot I'll destroy her!"

"Hurry up, lad! She's almost up in cable's length o' her," said Tim excitedly, "an' they're preparin' ter fire another shot."

Having properly gauged the gun, Jack turned a lever to discharge it.

But no discharge followed.

A blank look crossed the boy's face, and he gasped:

"Why, what's the matter? It was good for one hundred shots."

"Listen—vot's dot noise?" queried Fritz.

They heard a low, sibilant hiss coming from the gun.

Jack closely examined the gun, and gave a start.

"The air reservoirs are leaking!" he exclaimed in disgust, "and all the power is gone. The gun is useless now until we can repair it. This is too bad—too bad!"

"Vat yer vhas goin' ter do about id?" anxiously asked the pugnacious Fritz. "Don'd yer see dot shunk vhas glose up by dot Mary Scott alretty. Holy Moses, Shack! vhas ve got to stay here und led 'em got der best uf dot fight mit-oudt toing somedings?"

"There is only way for us to act now, boys."

"How?" eagerly demanded Tim.

"Go below and plant a torpedo under the pirate."

"Aye, aye! Down we goes, then, lad," said the old sailor quickly. "Who's goin' to fasten ther torpedo?"

"I'll do it," said Jack. "Bring us under the junk—quick!"

The old sailor sunk the catamaran twenty feet, and turning on all the electric lights, he started the boat ahead.

Jack, in the meantime, hastened back into the storeroom, and hastily attired himself in a diving suit of aluminum, upon the back of which was strapped a reservoir of air.

On top of the helmet was an electric light, supplied from a battery he carried on the knapsack; in his belt he carried an electric knife and revolver, and from a locker he took a long brass cartridge, with a sharp spike on one end and a binding-post on the other.

He then entered a small closet at the extreme end of the boat, shut the water-tight door and opened the sea-door, letting in the water.

He then stepped out on the deck that encircled the deck-houses, and fastening a copper wire to the torpedo binding-post, he went up forward and fastened the other end of the wire to a binding-post on the front of the pilot-house.

A moment later the boy saw the hull of the junk floating overhead, and Tim sent the Mermaid up toward it.

CHAPTER XI.

A COMBAT WITH A SAW-FISH.

Jack had invented metallic discs in the helmets of the diving suits, similar to those used for telephones, by which he could speak and hear much the same as if he wore no suit at all under water.

One of the window-panes of the pilot-house was also furnished with one of these ingenious contrivances, and as soon as the boat darted up toward the hull of the junk, by the use of the propellers astern, the boy shouted to Tim:

"As soon as I fasten the cartridge, back her away fifty yards."

"Werry good!" assented the old sailor, stopping the Mermaid.

She came to a pause directly beneath the junk.

"Don't touch lever No. 7 till I give you the order," warned the boy, "or you may explode the cartridge in my hand."

"I won't," replied Tim. "Can yer reach her keel?"

"Easily," assented the boy, sticking the spike of the torpedo in the hull of the junk. "Now back away, Tim, as fast as possible."

The old mariner obeyed.

Jack paid out the insulated copper wire as fast as the Mermaid recoiled, and when they were at a safe distance the boy yelled:

"Now—turn the lever!"

"Ay, ay!" came Tim's reply. "Look out—here she goes!"

He turned the lever—a current of electricity flashed over the wire to the torpedo, and there sounded a fearful explosion as the cartridge burst beneath the Chinese boat.

In an instant the junk was blown to pieces, and the violently agitated water made the catamaran spin like a top.

"Up to the surface with you!" cried Jack.

"Ay, ay!" cheerily replied Tim.

The water was pumped from the hulls and the boat ascended.

As soon as it emerged they found themselves close to the Mary Scott, but nothing was left of the junk but a mass of floating timbers, to some of which a few of the pirates were clinging.

The crew of the American ship were amazed at the sudden destruction of the junk, for the Chinamen had been on the point of grappelling the ship to board it when it was blown up.

But the moment they saw the Mermaid emerge from the waves they understood what occasioned the surprise, and uttered a wild cheer that amply expressed their gratitude to our friends.

Jack stood upon the forward deck, and grasping the railing, shouted:

"Were any of you injured by the explosion?"

"Not a soul!" replied Captain Bunsby. "Did you blow her up?"

"Of course. I hope you have confidence in us now?"

"More than I had before," admitted the skipper.

"Belay thar, Jack!" roared Tim, just then. "The fellers wot wuz hangin' on them planks is a-boardin' us on all sides!"

The boy glanced around and saw that several of the pirates who were left had gained the low-lying decks of the Mermaid.

Others were swimming up to follow them, and it soon looked as if the entire remainder would get upon the catamaran.

"Back with you!" shouted the boy. "We don't want such vile cutthroats upon this craft!"

He sprang toward them, but drawing the long knives they carried, the desperate pirates rushed to meet him.

Jack pulled out his pistol and fired at them.

No report came from the electric weapon, but the moment the bullets struck the bodies of those he hit they exploded inside the rascals and blew them to pieces.

Undaunted and desperate, however, the yellow-skinned wretches who escaped getting shot pressed on, and a huge fellow reached the boy and aimed a thrust at him with his knife.

Jack had used up every shot in the pistol, but parrying the blow with the weapon, he turned it aside, knocked it from the celestial's hand and grappled with him.

A fearful struggle then ensued, and several more of the pirates rushed to their companion's assistance. Jack dragged the big fellow to the edge of the deck and attempted to push him off.

The Chinaman fell from the boat down into the water, but he dragged the boy with him, and the leaden weights strapped on Jack's breast and back at once sunk them, clasped in a tight embrace.

Down they shot like a ton of iron.

They were very likely in a place where the sea was very deep and the boy realized in a flash that his weighted suit would carry them to the bottom when both would certainly expire.

He flung out one hand and felt it grazing something.

Instinctively his fingers closed upon it and he felt a thrill of joy pass over him when he found that it was the electric wire by which the torpedo was exploded that blew up the junk.

Jack clung to it with all his strength and the Chinaman hung onto him for a few moments.

The rascal was fast strangling, however, and at last let go and sank down lower out of the boy's sight.

Released of his drowning opponent, Jack caught hold of the wire with both hands and began to hoist himself up toward the surface again, when to his dismay he found that the boat was descending.

In his alarm over Jack's protracted absence below, Tim had sunk the catamaran, leaving the Chinamen who had been on deck struggling upon the surface.

Down came the boat, faster than Jack could climb up the wire, and the fear flashed across the boy's mind that he would be carried down to a depth of more than three hundred feet.

If he was, the pressure of water would certainly kill him.

"Tim! Tim!" he yelled at the top of his voice. "Stop the boat!"

But the old sailor evidently did not hear him, for the boat continued its rapid descent.

It reached a depth of two hundred feet, and Jack's alarm increased, and he hurried his ascent as fast as he could go.

Water is a good conductor of sound, and the boy shouted again:

"Stop the boat! Tim, stop the boat!"

This time he was evidently more successful, for the Mermaid came to a sudden pause, and he heard Tim roar:

"Whar are ye, lad, whar are ye?"

"Below the Mermaid!"

"Shall I lower her more?"

"No, no; I'll come up to you!"

"All right, my hearty!"

Up climbed the boy as fast as he could go, and presently he reached the deck, panting and exhausted, in plain view of his friends, who were peering out of the pilot-house windows.

They saw at once, then, where he had been.

"A little more and you would have killed me!" exclaimed Jack.

"Great heavens!" groaned Tim. "Whar's ther Chinaman?"

"Drowned, thank heaven!"

"Air ye a-comin' inside?"

"Yes. Hold on a moment!"

As Jack spoke he walked along the deck on the port side, and had just reached the midship section, when a huge, dark body came shooting from the darkness beyond, and, dashing headforemost into the brilliant halo of light, it struck the side of the cabin and recoiled.

The boy glanced at the monster in surprise, and then a thrill of alarm passed over him.

"It's a saw-fish!" he gasped. "And the vicious creature may dash its ugly saw through one of the windows, break the glass and fill the boat with water!"

The fish had come to a pause a few yards distant.

It looked very much like a shark, except that its snout was elongated into a flat, bony saw, armed on each edge with about twenty large, bony spines, or teeth.

The monster was fully eighteen feet long, and had made an effort to drive the formidable weapon at its snout into the Mermaid, as they sometimes plunge them into hulls of ships.

Jack saw it fix its ugly little eyes upon him, and dreading an encounter with the monster, he glided hastily toward the stern to get within the boat, out of harm's way, for if once the terrible sword should strike him it would either mangle and kill, or it would knock him down into the depths again.

He had hardly taken two strides, however, when the fish shot at him like a flash of lightning.

There could be no doubt of its intentions; its attack was directed at him, and he let himself drop upon the deck with surprising suddenness, and pulled out his electric knife.

No sooner was he down when the saw-fish flashed by over his head like a meteor, and struck the cabin again.

Up went Jack's hand with his weapon, and touching a spring he caused the long blade to shoot out of the knife-handle and plunge into the fish, laden with an electric current.

It gave the leviathan a terrible gash and a powerful shock, causing a convulsive tremor to shoot through it.

The spasm caused the fish to squirm, bending itself in two and its tail struck the boy a violent blow.

He was knocked spinning to the edge of the deck and fell over, as the fish plunged away; but flinging out his hands, letting his knife fall, and grasping the railing, he saved himself from a fall down into the gulf below.

Within a minute the fish turned to renew the attack.

Jack was now weaponless.

CHAPTER XII.

IN THE YELLOW SEA.

"Help! Help!"

"Shack! Vere vhas you?"

"On the port deck! Look out for the saw-fish!"

"Donner und blitzten! Vat kind of a t'ing you vhas gall dot?"

Fritz, arrayed in a diving suit, had come out to Jack's assistance when he heard the boy's cry, and just as he came around to the stern he saw the boy hanging to the railing.

Hardly had he seen this sight when the saw-fish whizzed by, and one of its spasmodic throes flung the enormous body

against Fritz with such violence that the Dutch boy was slammed up against the deck-house, yelling for help.

Jack pulled himself up on the deck again.

"Have you got a pistol?" he gasped.

"Yah! Shiminey Christmas, dot vhas proken mine neck!" groaned Fritz, handing Jack the weapon. "Go for dot son-of-a-gun, und plough him all by pieces! Vot you t'ink—I'm made of galvanized iron? Och, donner-vetter! Vere id vhas gone by itselluf?"

The saw-fish had vanished beyond the halo of light.

"It is gone! Get inside while we have the chance!"

"Vot iss? Go in—me! Nefer! Gief me a ax till I baralyze id!"

"Hurry up—go on! Don't you run any chances with saw-fishes. They tackle whales sometimes, let alone Dutchmen, and seldom fail to kill their prey!"

"I don't been afraid even if id vhas a hammer-fish, or a plane-fish, or a—och! here id comes back now!" and with a rush Fritz made for the door, appalled at the size of the monster.

Jack laughed grimly.

"His spunk is all gone!" he muttered.

Then he aimed at the oncoming leviathan and fired.

The ball sped true to its mark and exploded, blowing a great hole in the saw-fish, from whence its life's blood flowed.

Attracted by the smell of the blood, a shark suddenly appeared in sight, and in its turn was followed by several more of the cannibals of the deep.

They darted at the yet living saw-fish and turning over on their backs seized the quivering fish in their rapacious jaws, tore it to pieces, and voraciously devoured it!

In the midst of the cannibalistic feast Jack and Fritz went inside of the boat again, and, closing the sea-door, they started a pump, emptying the closet of the water it contained.

They then ascended several steps and entered the dynamo-room, where they took off their diving suits.

Joining Tim in the pilot-house, they found the old sailor sending the boat to the surface, where they presently emerged.

By that time the Mary Scott was a mile or more away and they let her keep her lead, while the rest of the survivors of the blown-up junk had been drowned.

The breeze freshened as the day advanced, and the American ship passed on into the Yellow Sea, between the islands of Majicosima and Napakiang, in the Loo Choo group, toward nightfall.

"We are going to have ugly weather to-night, I'm afraid," said Jack as he pointed up at the dark, gloomy sky, "and it is five hundred miles from here to Shanghai, where the Mary Scott intends to stop first, before she goes south through the Strait of Formosa to Hong Kong and Canton."

"Ay, but the Mermaid can weather it easy, lad, so what need we care?" asked Tim. "Thar ain't nuthin' to skeer us, an'—"

"But you forget that the phantom ship most always appears when the weather is muggy, according to the reports we got," said Jack, "and it behooves us to keep a lookout for her in this storm, much sharper than if the moon and stars were shining."

"Den ve don't vant dem 'lectric lights all purnin'," said Fritz, shutting off the glaring effulgence, "or dem ghostesses vill see us alretty."

"We had better all remain up to-night," said Jack, as he began to mend the leak in the air reservoir in the pneumatic gun. "I have a feeling as if we were going to be kept active to-night."

"I'm willin', fer one," said Tim, taking a chew of navy plug as he clung with one hand to the wheel and fixed the glare of his glass eye ahead with his good optic. "How 'bout you, Fritz?"

"Vell, so long as I got me mine accordion to keep me awake—"

"Wot!" roared Tim, with a start, for he hated this instrument with an undying aversion, "ha' ye got that ole rattletrap wi' yer?"

"I dink so," grinned Fritz, as he lifted the wheezing music-box from behind a chair and began to grind out the melancholy tune of "Sweet Violets," in a droaning fashion. "Vot you t'ink—dot I go mitoud dot t'ing on dis drip alretty vonct?"

"Stop it!" howled Tim frantically. "Goldurn yer ugly figgerhead, yer know werry well as I feel my brain turnin' wi' that thing playin'."

"Och, got oudt," said Fritz, with a chuckle of fiendish glee, as he continued the mournful dirge. "You vhas subbose dot a vooden-legged, ret-nosed, bandy-eyed oldt chicken like you vhas made me gief up mine peautiful moosic. Vell, I should laugh vonct."

A desperate look came over Tim's face, for he dared not leave the wheel for a moment to wreak vengeance upon his tormentor.

"Whiskers!" he howled, banging the floor with his wooden peg.

His little red monkey came hopping up to him from an obscure corner, chattering and blinking as if in a rage.

"Whiskers," said Tim, "didn't I teach yer ter tear every hair outer ther head o' a dummy accordeen player when we wuz ashore?"

The monkey chattered, and scratched himself, looking up at Tim's face.

"Aye, lad, yer understan's me, don't yer? Now, thar's a flabbergasted, pot-bellied, moon-faced Dutch galoot ower thar, an' ther word o' command I larned ye wuz: rake him! Rake him from stem ter starn, lad!"

Whiskers evidently understood the word of command.

For with a howl like a rusty steam whistle and a hop that carried him through the air like a balloon, he landed up on the grinning Fritz's shoulders, buried his fingers in the Dutch boy's yellow hair, and began to yank.

Fritz stopped playing, and his grin vanished.

"Murder!" he bawled, springing madly to his feet. "Och! Och! Och! Le' go of mine hair! Holy shumpin' Sherusalem! You vhas made me baldheaded alretty onct! Oh, le' go, I dolt yer, or——"

He dropped his accordion and began to dance with agony.

Whiskers pulled and tugged and jerked with all his might at Fritz's yellow locks, and as he failed to get as much hair out as he thought proper, he began to bite it off in chunks.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tim delightedly, and he nearly doubled up with mirth. "Go fer him, Whiskers, gol durn yer hidel! Rip ther hull top-knot off o' ther parrot-toed lubber! Rake him! Rake him, an', by gum, I'll—— Ha! there he goes!"

"I vhas murder yer mit a poker!" yelled Fritz frantically, trying to dislodge the delighted monkey, and getting his finger bit for his pains; and he ran head-first against the door.

Whiskers got a whack that nearly collapsed him, and Fritz saw stars for a moment, as he plunged head-first into the cabin and disappeared in a heap under the table.

Tim roared louder, and while Whiskers dashed away, disgusted with his defeat, Fritz came back with a bar of iron, and offered to brain Tim for a glass of lager and a pretzel.

As the old sailor did not bribe him to do it, and Jack grumbled at them for carrying their pranks too far, there was a cessation put upon hostilities, and peace was restored.

The water into which the catamaran had forged now was as yellow as saffron and very shallow.

There could be no mistake of their location now.

Ahead of them the Mary Scott was forging on under shortened sails, for the breeze was increasing to a gale as the sky grew darker and muttering thunder rolled angrily in the distance.

"We had better shorten the distance between the ship and the Mermaid," said Jack, "for in this gathering gloom we may lose sight of her lights. Put on more speed and close the gap, Tim."

This was done, and when they were within quarter of a mile of the ship speed was reduced to correspond with the ship's.

Half an hour thus passed by, the thunder rolling nearer each moment, and brilliant flashes of lightning zig-zagged across the sky.

The waves, driven before a furious gale, had arisen to great yellow billows and breakers, and rain beat down.

Jack did not have a light on his boat.

He left Tim in charge of the wheel, and peered out of the window, when an unusually brilliant flash of lightning tore through the murky vault of heaven, and he uttered a startled cry.

"Look there, Tim!" he gasped, pointing ahead in the gloom.

"Good Lord, ther phantom ship!"

"Aye, and under a full head of sail in this roaring gale, and bearing down upon the Mary Scott full tilt."

"Blast my top-lights, it's all up with them, then!"

"Not if I can help it, my boy."

"Wot kin yer do, Jack?"

"Blow her out of the water!" emphatically said the boy. "I'll soon prove whether that ship is material or spectral."

He started the searchlight, and flashed its glaring rays upon the phantom ship, which was then less than a mile away.

Then sighting the already loaded gun, he turned the lever.

The shot was noiselessly discharged, and went screaming on its way across the heaving waves toward the ghostly ship.

Jack sprang to the window and eagerly peered out to watch the effect.

CHAPTER XIII.

INTO A SOLID WALL OF ROCK.

Fritz and Tim were as much excited as Jack was, and kept their glances riveted upon the phantom ship.

Only a short interval passed, when suddenly one of the masts of the spectre was seen to disappear.

"Hurrah!" yelled Jack. "I struck her."

"Sure enough!" assented Tim.

"I tort dot bullet would flew troo it mitout broken something," said Fritz disappointedly. "Ain't dot de vay ghostesses acts vonct?"

"That's their reputation among superstitious people," laughed Jack; "but this phantom seems to be too substantial to withstand a shot from ray gun, for I've blown one of its masts away."

"Keel haul me," gasped Tim, "if it ain't runnin' away!"

"So it is," said Jack; "and her mainmast is gone, too."

"Dot vhas a funny kind of a ghost ship!" said Fritz.

"I'll follow the rascal!" said Jack suddenly.

"Wot! Run down a goblin craft?" asked Tim, somewhat alarmed.

"Of course! If I can do her so much damage, why not more?"

"Aye, now; but I don't want no closer acquaintance, I don't."

"Bah! Come about, quick! She's a wonderfully fast sailer, and may fade out of sight in this—ha! she's gone now!"

Just as Tim timidly turned the catamaran to follow the white, transparent ship, it suddenly faded away.

It was out of sight in a twinkling.

The three adventurers gazed at each other in wonderment. What had become of the phantom ship?

That was what puzzled them.

"By thunder!" ripped from Tim's lips.

"Och!" ejaculated Fritz, looking very solemn.

For several moments none of them spoke, but Jack finally turned away, and they saw that his face was very pale.

"Change your course, Tim!" said he briefly.

"Are yer a-goin' ter give up ther chase?"

"I freely acknowledge that I am fairly beaten—puzzled—mystified!"

"Und me, too," said Fritz, his eyes as big as saucers.

They scanned the surface of the sea in the direction where the phantom ship had been riding, but saw nothing but the yellow, heaving waters, and when the lightning came and flashed over the scene, still nothing was revealed.

Off to the windward the Mary Scott was plunging along with a storm staysail set forward and a balance reefed spanker aft; all the crew were crowded to the bulwarks, gazing in the direction where the phantom ship had last been seen.

It was evident that the mysterious vessel had been observed by the American crew, and that they were yet looking for it.

Tim shut off the searchlight.

"Despite the fact that I carried away one of her masts with its sails and rigging," said Jack, "it is mysterious to me how that goblin-craft could carry such a full head of sail as it did in such a fierce gale as is blowing now."

"Aye," answered Tim, "thar's wind enough a-blowin' ter tear ther stoutest canvas inter ribbons, and blow it out o' its bolt rope. 'Sides that 'ere, how d'ye account fer 'em bein' so transparent as ter see through 'em when ther lightning wuz a-flashin' on t'other side o' ther phantom ship, ther same's if no sails wuz thar?"

"Dot vhas der mystery," said Fritz.

"Then, ag'in," said Tim, warning up to his subject, "wot ecame o' ther phantom ship when it vanished so sudden? Did it go down inter Davy Jones' locker, never ter rise no more, or did it jest melt inter air an' float away?"

"You've got me again," said Jack.

"Now, what be yer a-goin' ter do—foller ther Mary Scott?"

"I can see no other course to follow, for——"

"Py shingo!" interrupted Fritz in startled tones. "Looker! Looker!"

He was excitedly pointing off to the sea, and they followed the direction he indicated with their glances.

The phantom ship had suddenly appeared in view again, although where it came from they could not imagine.

It simply flashed up, and there it was, riding the surging billows, its graceful outlines wearing a pale, ghostly light, much as if every plank, spar, mast, sail and rope were made of a faint phosphorescent light, which was strongly outlined against the gloom.

The mainmast was yet missing, but the strange vessel glided over the raging billows with extreme grace and ease.

Instead of going toward the Mary Scott, now it was sailing away from her, its luminous outlines clearly defined against the dull darkness, which now enshrouded everything.

"Well, this is the queerest and most uncanny thing I ever heard of!" ejaculated Jack, his eyes opening wide with astonishment.

The lightning kept playing incessantly, and Tim exclaimed:

"Shiver me, lads, but ha' ye obsarved as thar ain't nobody upon ther deck o' yonder strange craft ter work her riggin' an' steer her?"

Fritz glared through the night glass at her.

"I t'ink so, neider," he remarked. "I don't even see a cockroach alretty."

With his attention called to this important point, Jack looked carefully, and saw that his friends were not mistaken.

"There's another singular thing," he remarked. "Most ships under sail careen with the wind, but her hull rides as evenly as ours, and she is speeding along at a rate of speed equal to twenty knots without any apparent effort."

"What in blazes d'yer make o' it, then?" queried Tim in perplexity.

"I am completely puzzled," hopelessly replied Jack. "Where is she heading?"

"South-by-east," replied Tim, intently studying her.

"Dot looks so if it vhas all made of electricity," said Fritz. "If I vhas had der New Yorker Zeitung by mein-selluf I dink I could read dose bersonal columns witoud no candle near dot ship."

"I've got a plan!" said Jack. "I'm going to follow her unseen."

"How you vhas do yourself dot?"

"Sink the Mermaid and track her by my camera obscura—you know I've got one fixed in the ball on top of the searchlight."

"Och! Vy I didn'd t'ink of dot vonet?"

"Tim, bring in the white-topped table and set it beside me."

"Aye, in one minute," said Tim, leaving the wheel in his hands and stumping back into the cabin.

Jack lowered the Mermaid until only the searchlight was above water.

By the time he got her stationary Tim returned with a small, round, white-painted table, which he stood beside the boy.

Jack thereupon seized a lever which put the lenses in operation up above, and giving it a turn he swept it around with his glance fixed upon the table until the dark sea scenes were suddenly embellished with a view of the spectral ship.

It was reflected down upon the table, surrounded by the dark background of turbid sea and stormy sky.

"Dere dot vos," said Fritz. "Vait."

"I'll steer after it," said Jack, putting on a speed of forty knots.

Away dashed the Mermaid under the surface in pursuit of the phantom ship, and rapidly gained upon it.

Jack was wild to get another shot at the queer craft, but he restrained this feeling, as he was curious now to see what the peculiar vessel was going to do.

He made up his mind to follow her.

By this means he might find out something about her,

and if he failed in this he had no doubt of being able to fire at her again before long in the near future.

On went the spectral ship, and on came the catamaran behind her, Jack steering by means of the camera.

Several miles were bowled off in this fashion, the phantom going straight for the south-by-east.

"She seems to be heading for Napakiang Island!" said Jack, as he caught by the lightning's flash the dim outline of the Loo Choo Islands delineated upon the reflecting board.

"Then she's given up her chase o' ther Mary Scott?" queried Tim.

"No doubt of it. Look! Now her course is changed more to the southward—yes, she is going toward Napakiang!"

The phantom ship was heading directly toward a mass of high, beetling crags, against which the waves were beating and breaking with a sullen roar amid showers of spray.

A sudden grating of the catamaran's keels startled the divers.

"We are in very shoal water!" exclaimed Jack, raising the boat a few feet. "If we ain't careful we may run aground."

"Den how dot phandom sail here?" questioned Fritz.

"Ah! Can't ghosts go anywhere, yer lunkhead?" growled Tim.

"It's more probable she is in a channel, and we may find it if we get in her wake," said Jack calculatingly.

The spectral ship was certainly going in a peculiar, tortuous and winding manner, and Jack found that it was certainly a channel she was in.

It seemed queer that a supernatural ship required deep water like any ordinary vessel in which to sail, yet it was so.

By following close behind her they now had no trouble, and to their surprise they saw her keep straight on toward the cliffs.

"She'll go ter pieces ag'in them rocks if she keeps on!" gasped Tim.

"We'll soon see!" replied Jack, keeping a sharp watch on the phantom.

With a swift, stately motion the strange vessel sped on, and in a few moments her bow was in the beating surf.

She seemed to plunge right ahead into the solid wall of rock, and gradually dwindle away into—nothing.

The next moment she was gone.

She had vanished as completely as if she melted.

CHAPTER XIV.

STRANDED ON AN ISLAND.

With cries of astonishment our three friends brought the catamaran to a pause and glared at the cliffs in stupefaction.

They were more convinced than ever that the fugitive was a ghostly ship, for no vessel made by human hands could have sailed right through a wall of solid, massive rock.

The heaving waters pounded the catamaran up and down, and huge, bellowing waves broke over her with the noise of thunder.

"It seems impossible! It can't be true!" gasped Jack.

"Aye, but yer seen it vanish!" answered Tim, in scared tones.

"There must be an opening—a bend around which she went."

"Oh, no! I'm blest if I can see any sich thing!"

"It may be masked by canvas painted in imitation of the rocks," argued Jack, and has a slit through which the ship could pass when the folds would close together again—or the rocks may turn on a pivot——"

"Can't be!" said Tim. "Looker them 'ere waves. They'd pound it open or tear it down, an' this 'ere wind would ribbon it."

What the old sailor said was true.

But to convince himself Jack turned the searchlight on the cliffs, as the boat was now on the surface, and as the powerful rays fell on the rocks the boy saw that they presented a barrier that could scarcely have been penetrated by the ball of a ten-inch gun.

To further test them, he took a hand grenade from the ammunition-box, and, going out on deck, flung it with all his might at the cliffs.

The bomb exploded with a dull detonation, and tore chips of the rocks off, but that was all the damage it did.

Jack was thoroughly satisfied.

"If it is a phantom ship," said he doggedly, "having the

power to vanish, reappear, and sail through rocky cliffs. I have proved that it is not proof against my gun; and the very first chance I get I'm going to blow it to the deuce!"

"I tink ve vhas petter got oudt of dis blace," suggested Fritz.

"Aye, now," replied Tim, "we are a-makin' leeway fast, and afore long them 'ere waves'll wash us agin' ther rocks, an' dash ther Mermaid ter pieces, so it will!"

"Do you remember the course of the passage?" queried Jack.

"No," was Tim's startled reply. "How could I?"

"Then we are in extreme danger, for the wall on either side of the channel is not so deep that we can go over it in safety."

The Mermaid was turned around, and they kept her upon the surface, headed her for the sea, and started off at random.

She had not gone far, however, before they heard a dull grating again under the keel and felt an unpleasant jar.

"We've struck shallow water out of the channel," said Jack.

"Aye, an' I can't find ther channel agin', wot's more!" said Tim.

"Let her drive ahead; we must run chances now."

"Ahead she goes, then," said Tim, and he kept the boat on.

She went along all right for a while, but presently there sounded the same scratching, bumping and rasping noise, and with a sudden shock the catamaran came to a pause.

"Caught!" exclaimed Jack.

"Stuck fast, sure enough!" glumly replied Tim.

"Can't you back or turn her?"

"No—I've tried it."

"Then here we must stay."

Whitecaps were dancing all around the boat now, and they felt each big roller come hissing in, lifting them up, and banging the boat down again on the sand with a terrible crash.

If this sort of pounding kept on the boat would inevitably be weakened all over, if not ruined entirely, yet there was not water enough under her keels to float her, for the bows had run up on a bar, and she stayed there despite every effort Tim made to move her away.

Hour after hour passed by, and toward daylight the wind lulled and the heavy seas calmed down, the thunder-claps ceased and the lightning played less frequently in the murky sky.

As the tide receded it left the catamaran high and dry on a sandy shore.

Jack was the first to observe this, and it caused him great uneasiness.

"How, under the heaven, are we to get her afloat again?" he muttered as he stood alone on watch in the pilot-house and his two friends lay sleeping in their berths. "Here we are, stranded upon the shore of an island inhabited by heathen Chinese and Japanese, and no help near. I'm afraid our cruise is over!"

He watched the clouds disappearing, and saw the sun come up.

It cast a ruddy glow upon the dark cliffs, and showed him that they lay upon a barren strip of sandy shore, covered with hillocks and indentations, while a short distance away the surf beat in with a dull roar in a mass of foam.

The Yellow Sea stretched as far as the eye could see, its choppy surface gleaming like burnished gold in the splendor of the sun, while here and there its surface was dotted with sails of junks that slowly drifted along before a slight breeze.

Further along the rugged shore line was broken and stretched way inland where a strange-looking country lay teeming with tropical fruit, farms of tea plants, tremendous rice fields and other vegetations which our friends could not see.

Fritz and Tim soon awakened, and after a survey of their situation the Dutch boy went into the galley to prepare breakfast, while Tim began to calculate their exact location, and Jack went out.

He found the sand ordinarily spongy, yet hard enough to walk on, and strolled over to the sea shore.

Here he came to a pause and measured the distance with his eyes, to the boat, and then returned to the catamaran.

From the ammunition-box he took a small can and went out with it again.

"I think I see a way out of our difficulty," he muttered.

Unscrewing the cork of the can, he drew a gully, with a

stick, in the sand, from the boat's prow to the shore, and into it he poured a stream of floury powder from the can.

He afterward covered the gully up.

Then he attached an electric wire to the train of powder, and, going into the pilot-house, touched a lever.

Instantly the powder was exploded.

No noise was made beyond a violent puff.

Yet a vast cloud of sand was scattered in all directions, and flew a thousand feet in the air, where the wind scattered it.

A tremendous trench was ripped into the sand where the train of powder had been lying, which rapidly filled up with water that filtered from the surrounding sand and came in from the surf on shore.

No harm was done to the boat whatever.

"Hello!" gasped Tim. "Wot's this?"

"I've made a channel by which we can reach deep water," replied Jack, with a cheerful smile. "When the tide comes in this afternoon we will try to get the boat out by the stream into deep water—don't you see?"

"By thunder, you've got a head!"

"How could I live without one, you big donkey? Anyway, though, Tim, you see half the boat is afloat up forward, and by tilting up the stern we can easily get her after part in."

"Lord save yer, let's try right away!" eagerly said the old sailor.

They called Fritz, and, going out, put Jack's plan in operation so successfully that the boat at once glided into the stream.

"You vhas dalk aboutt dot rend-rock bowder, nidroglycerine, gun-cotton und udder oxblosifs, dey vhasn'd by id vhen ve vhas used dot leedle vite bowder vot you vhas invended, Shack!" said Fritz.

"It is the greatest explosive known to modern science," the boy replied, "and of such great force that its manufacture is prohibited by law. I find good use for it, however."

They found that the channel was plenty large and deep enough to float the boat, but when they got her close to the seashore they could not get her into the water.

"We must wait for the tide to rise—that will give us plenty of depth to float out," said Jack cheerfully. "You can see for yourselves that the embankment beyond is too shallow to let us float there for some distance out."

Fritz announced breakfast at this juncture, so they went into the cabin and partook of the meal.

"Did you notice the crooked, winding channel running in from the sea to the base of the cliff, which the phantom ship followed, boys?" asked Jack, during the meal.

"I seen me dot," said Fritz, with a nod, "und I vish ve vhas in id."

"As soon's mess is over," said Tim, "I'm a-goin' ter folly ther stream up ther cliff, and—"

"Hark! What's that?" interposed Jack, holding up his hand.

They all listened intently.

"Men's voices!" Tim exclaimed, with a start.

A low murmur of human tones reached their ears from outside.

"Vot kind of langvitch dot vhas?" questioned Fritz.

Jack sprang to his feet.

"They sound like Chinamen speaking," he said. "I'm going to see."

He stepped to the door at the side and passed out on deck.

To his surprise he saw a score of what looked like Japanese and Chinese standing beside the gully, excitedly talking, and pointing at the boat, and as soon as he appeared they began to speak faster.

Just then their ranks parted and to the boy's amazement he beheld a tall, white man, clad in seaman's costume, push his way through the crowd and approach the Mermaid.

CHAPTER XV.

A DUEL WITH GUNS.

The stranger was a tall, heavily built man, with a black beard and dark eyes that gleamed beneath a pair of shaggy eyebrows of jet, and to all appearances he was an American or an Englishman.

He saluted Jack politely, and said, in English:

"How are you, stranger? Ain't you a little out of your latitude here in that odd-looking catamaran?"

"Considerably," replied Jack. "The fact is, we are stranded. But it is fair to infer that you are as much a stranger here as I am."

"On the contrary, I am a resident of this island and the most affluent friend of the Chinese mandarin upon whose estate you are trespassing," replied the man. "My name is Captain Firebrand, the Flying Yankee; now, pray, who are you?"

"My name is Jack Wright, a boy inventor. I came from America in this catamaran, and my business, which is of a private nature, brings me out upon the Yellow Sea, where I was cruising when we were stranded."

"Oh, you say we?"

"My two friends inside. And your companions?"

"Are fishermen, and tenants of my friend, the mandarin."

"We now know each other quite well," laughed Jack.

"Yes, indeed; but I am curious to learn what your mission is?"

"But you cannot be more curious than I am to learn yours."

"That is a secret which you may ultimately learn, young man."

"Permit me then to say the same thing in regard to my own affairs."

The bearded man scowled with ill humor.

It was evident to Jack that he was a person accustomed to command and be obeyed, and not meet with such cool indifference as that with which he was treated by the boy.

"My friend, the mandarin," said Captain Firebrand, in ugly tones, "having been apprised of the presence of your boat here, sent me down from the cliffs to bring you before him to give an account of yourselves, and I beg of you all to come ashore."

"With all due respect to his royal highness, or whatever you call him, I respectfully beg to decline seeing him," said Jack.

"In that case it becomes my duty to force you——"

"Whereupon I shall most certainly resist!" said Jack coolly.

"And kill you all, if I fail——"

"If I don't kill you first!" said Jack calmly.

He saw that the man was in deadly earnest, and apprehended that there was trouble in store for him with these people.

A surprised look crossed Captain Firebrand's bearded face, and turning to the Chinamen he spoke to them in their own tongue, upon which they all withdrew modern firearms from the folds of their blouses and aimed them at Jack.

The boy sprang back through the door and closed it.

"Enemies!" exclaimed he breathlessly. "Close the shutters!"

Tim and Fritz hastened to obey him, and they had no sooner done as he asked when the Chinese fired at the boat.

The aluminum plates of the Mermaid were bullet proof, though, and the shots, therefore, failed to do any harm.

Peering out through loopholes they opened, our friends saw the natives talking excitedly to the man.

"I'll soon put an end to their treachery!" said the boy, in grim tones, as he took a hand grenade from the locker. "Watch them!"

He flung the grenade through one of the portholes and it struck the ground in the midst of the Chinamen and exploded with a fearful report that echoed up on the crags.

There came a flash of fire, a puff of smoke, and a vast upheaval of sand and the remains of Chinamen.

A huge hole was blown in the beach, and when the smoke lifted, Jack saw Captain Firebrand and several of his men running toward the cliffs as fast as they could go, while scattered around where the bomb struck were the few remains of the rest.

"There's an easy-gained victory for us!" said Jack complacently.

"Aye, but who wuz thim 'ere lubbers, anyway?" asked Tim.

The boy told him, and they saw the fugitives disappear among the rocks that lined the base of the cliff.

"Wot dot veller could be, und vhat he wanted?" asked Fritz.

They all saw some design in what had transpired, but they could fathom what it was, and spent the time speculating over it while waiting for the tide to rise, and the hours passed by.

Nothing more was seen of their enemies.

"For killing their friends they may try to avenge themselves," said Jack. "We must be very careful now."

The tide had turned an hour before, and came flooding the sand flats all around the trench where the boat laid.

"It'll require at least an hour ter float us over that 'ere bar," said Tim speculatively, "and I hopes as we won't get tackled afore."

"Holy chee!" ejaculated Fritz, who was peering out the window, and interrupting the old sailor. "Looker up on dem gliffs."

He pointed at the top of the crags as he spoke, and they saw that the edge of the precipice was swarming with Chinamen, among whom they easily distinguished the figure of Captain Firebrand.

They had drawn a mounted gun to the edge, and were then in the act of depressing the muzzle to bear upon the catamaran.

Our friends were very much startled.

"They are afraid of our bombs at close range," exclaimed Jack, "and mean to try and blow us to pieces from up there."

Just then the gun was depressed to what the marksmen considered the proper angle, and Captain Firebrand discharged it.

There came a belch of fire and smoke, a thunderous roar and a terrific scream as a heavy shot came hurtling down from the bluffs toward the Mermaid.

Bang! came the shot, and it struck the sand a few feet away from the boat, ploughed it up in great furrows, and then buried itself out of sight.

"A miss is as good as a mile," said Jack, with a sigh of relief. "I'll return the compliment with my own gun."

"Shall I 'bout ship?" asked Tim.

"Yes; there's plenty room here."

The old sailor started the propellers, and spun the wheel around, when the Mermaid described a circle within her own length, and then came to a pause with her bow facing the cliffs.

Upon the cliff-top the Chinamen were reloading their gun and preparing for another shot at the catamaran.

"Ve vhas gooped up here in dis drench so like rats by a drap," regretfully said Fritz, as he glanced back at the bar which intercepted their passage from the stream to the sea.

"Jump ashore—we are close to the embankment here," said Jack, "and plant one of the torpedoes in the bar with an electric wire attached. You can then blow the bar away."

Happy at this suggestion, Fritz carried it out.

Scarcely was he ashore, however, when the gun on the cliffs roared out again, and a second shot rushed down, so well aimed that it struck the water with a splash between the after ends of the hulls, where it plunged into the bottom of the trench.

Jack elevated the muzzle of his own gun and sighted it.

"Missed again, eh?" he queried.

"Aye, aye!" answered Tim.

The boy then discharged his gun, and the projectile struck the edge of the cliff below where the gun and the Chinamen stood.

A great mass of rock and dirt shot up in the air.

When they glanced at the spot where the shot struck they beheld a huge, ragged fissure cut out of the rock.

Half of the Chinamen and their gun were blown to fragments.

Fritz ran over to the bar, planted his bomb, and after it had been exploded there was a clear channel to deep water.

There was a clear passage now, and under Jack's guidance the catamaran dashed through it without touching bottom and shot out upon the sea.

Jack kept his boat under water, and started the lights in a brilliant glow, for the cloudy night made the water look very dark.

He kept a sharp lookout ahead, and present descried a large white object ahead of the catamaran.

It soon proved to be the phantom ship.

"There it is, now!" exclaimed the boy, excitedly.

"But whar's its masts and sails?" demanded Tim.

"Folded back across her deck. The foot of the masts must be hinged to the deck, to double them back that way."

"Und dot ghostly light seems to be gone," said Fritz, disappointedly.

"Ghostly imagination you mean!" said Jack contemptuously.

"Don't you see that the ship, masts, spars, sails and ropes

are merely painted white? We have been duped! The ship is a wooden one!"

"So they are!" muttered Tim.

"And the phantom ship is a submarine boat!" said Jack.

"Shiminey Christmas!" ejaculated Fritz. "Dot vas so?"

"That settles it!" said Jack. "Now I see through the whole game. We never had a good look at the phantom ship at close range before. The transparent sails are merely big nets. What fools we have been to let ourselves be so deceived. But, then in a case where ghosts prevail, our imaginations become very vivid, and we actually believe extravagances which have no foundation, in fact. I'll soon put a final test to the case by firing at her."

The phantom ship was only a short distance ahead, and they saw that she was a steam vessel worked by a propeller. Everything about her was painted pure white.

Her masts and rigging lay folded upon the deck, and evidently worked by a hinge-like apparatus, while the divers saw that air was brought down to the submerged boat by the old-fashioned principle of big tubes that ran up to the surface.

She could not bury herself any more than enough to cover herself by the waves, and was worked by the crew from below deck by a series of ropes controlling the steering gear.

The mode of her descent and ascent was, no doubt, by pumping water ballast in or out, as it was required, to sink or raise her.

Jack saw through the humbug at once, but had to admit that the novelty of the idea was well calculated to deceive and terrify the simple-minded, superstitious sailors against whom the attacks of the ship were mostly directed at uncanny hours of night only.

It was then no cause for wonder to the boy that his shot had carried away her mainmast the time he crippled her.

Another impression dawned upon him.

Captain Firebrand must have been guilty of this queer contrivance, and it now became apparent that he had recognized the superiority of the Mermaid over the phantom ship for the use to which he put his white-painted boat, and for that reason he had been actuated in trying to secure Jack's catamaran.

The boy aimed his gun at the fugitive boat and fired.

The shot swept the rigging from the decks.

Another shot followed.

It carried away her bowsprit, and they saw her rise, surfaceward.

"Stand by for action!" cried Jack, excitedly. "They are going to the top!"

"Blow ther lubberly, craft ter smithereens!" exclaimed Tim.

Again Jack fired and the stern of the white boat was carried away.

Her bow swung around and Jack saw the name emblazoned to gilt, there, or

"THE FLYING YANKEE."

"That accounts for the title assumed by Captain Firebrand," said the boy, pointing at the letters, "but I've destroyed her now."

"She vhas up by der top alretty vonct," said Fritz, pointing.

"Then he will go by the same way," said Jack, raising the boat.

When they got to the surface they saw the phantom ship rolling helplessly on her side, her hull shattered and ready to sink, while a number of Chinese and Japanese were setting a quarter boat afloat.

There were a dozen of them, and they had Captain Firebrand in their midst as they left the sinking vessel and rowed away.

The catamaran came to a pause upon the surface, and Jack flung open a window and shouted sternly:

"Haul to, on your lives, there!"

"Give way!" hissed Captain Firebrand, doggedly, in Chinese.

The Mongolians obeyed him, and the boat shot along.

A frown mantled Jack's brow.

He drew a bead upon the hull of the boat, very carefully, with one of his electric pistols, and pulled the trigger.

The ball sped true to its mark and burst against the hull of the boat, blowing a big hole in it.

Instantly it filled with water and sank to the gunwales, leaving the crew swimming upon the surface.

"Maledictions upon you!" he heard Captain Firebrand roar.

"You had better surrender!" said Jack. "You are at our mercy."

"Take me aboard!" growled the man.

Jack ran the catamaran over among them, and not only Captain Firebrand, but all his crew clambered up on deck, their bare feet greatly facilitating their ascent.

No sooner were they safe out of the yellow water, though, when Captain Firebrand addressed his men in their native language, when they made a rush for the doors and windows.

It became very evident that they intended to try to gain control of the Mermaid, but Jack easily frustrated this design.

Turning lever No. 5 on the switchboard, he sent a current of electricity into the metal hull, and as the men wore no shoes they received the shock and began to yell and jump.

In a moment the boy had them all rendered helpless again.

"Fool!" cried Jack. "Did you imagine you could get the best of me?"

"Stop it!" screamed Captain Firebrand, in agony. "You are torturing us! Oh, I cannot stand this much longer!"

"Tim, shackle him!" said Jack to the sailor.

"Aye, aye, sir!"

"Fritz, you secure a couple of his men as witnesses."

"Yah!"

They both had on rubber-soled shoes, and going out on deck they took possession of Captain Firebrand and two of his men.

Upon seeing this the rest became scared and leaped into the sea.

Our friends were not sorry for this, as they were glad to get rid of them.

The unfortunate rascals swam to the fast-sinking wreck of the Flying Yankee and clambered upon it, while Captain Firebrand and his two companions were brought inside, and Jack shut off the current of electricity from the hulls.

Just then the boy descried a huge ship bearing down upon them from around the distant island, and a second look convinced him that it was a U. S. man-of-war.

In a short time she came up with the catamaran and Jack hailed her, when she hove to, and a boat was lowered and an officer and four marines embarked in it.

They came flying toward the catamaran, and a lieutenant boarded the submarine boat and accosted Jack.

The boy told him who he was, showed his letter of marque, and then explained how he had destroyed the phantom ship.

Amazed at his recital the officer looked well at the sinking Flying Yankee, and afterward captured the Mongolians upon her.

Jack now had a formidable witness of his prowess to satisfy the War Department at home, and when the wreck of the phantom ship sunk forever beneath the waves he parted company with the frigate.

"You are a nice humbug!" said Jack to Captain Firebrand; "but your infernal work is at an end now upon this sea, and when I get you back to the States you'll get your deserts."

"You have got the upper hand," said the captain, with a frown, "and I have lost my ship. But I don't want to stand trial. I will bribe you to let me go. But do as I say and you shall have millions of dollars' worth of gold, jewels and precious stones, which I have been a lifetime amassing from ships which my vessel ran down. You know how I wrecked them, and came around after every one was gone to get my plunder by the aid of diving suits."

"Your offer comes too late," said Jack. "I am going to the island now to take all I want."

CHAPTER XVI.

CONCLUSION.

A short run brought the Mermaid back to the island, and Jack sent his boat up the stream toward the cliffs.

No one appeared to dispute their entrance.

The place wore a deserted and desolate appearance.

"The bombardment we gave the town has driven the rascals out of it!" he told his friends. "If any of them remained we would have seen them long before now. I am satisfied that we will have no trouble."

Pursuing the stream up to the rocks, where it curved, they went around them and saw that they marked a huge aperture in the base of the cliff through which the stream flowed.

It was necessary to submerge the boat to follow it, and Jack sent her below the surface and drove her into the great tunnel.

Passing through, they came out in a valley where nestled a beautiful lake of great dimensions and very deep.

On three sides it was surrounded by woods, while on the fourth there nestled a picturesque town.

The quaint-looking houses were of the same design as those of the big Chinese cities, and among them rose several imposing edifices.

Not a soul was to be seen anywhere, which lent the place a most doleful appearance.

Jack steered his boat for the town and brought it to a pause at a landing place for some boats that were anchored near by.

Having assured themselves that there was no possibility of their prisoners escaping, they made the boat fast and went ashore.

Guided by Fritz, they proceeded to the largest building in the place and found it to be a magnificent temple.

Within it stood a huge idol of Buddha, erected by the inhabitants of the town, which, upon examination, proved to be made of solid silver.

Other rooms in the temple were inspected, and to Jack's amazement treasure to the value of several millions were discovered.

The catamaran was not capable of carrying away a quarter of it.

"If we can't take it all now we can at some future time," said Jack, "and I propose to cache all we can't carry across the Pacific."

"But whar can yer put it fer safe keeping?" queried Tim.

"We can bury it under the sea!"

This plan was accordingly carried out, for with any of his submarine boats Jack knew he could return at most any time and carry away the treasure without fear of molestation.

Having arranged all their plans they began to work at loading the Mermaid with the treasure, and having laden her with all she could carry, they sent her out upon the sea, followed the coast to a well-defined spot and then consigned the treasure to the deep.

Several trips were thus made with bars and ingots of gold and silver, evidently made up of thousands of different articles, melted up in a mass and molded into that form.

By nightfall of the succeeding day our friends had carried everything away, including the valuable idol, and at last loaded the Mermaid with a cargo for shipment.

The anguish of Captain Firebrand and his two men to witness the loss of their ill-gotten gains was intense.

They could do nothing but weep, rave and gnash their teeth, for our friends had them so secured that there was not the remotest possibility of their escape.

"Your misfortune," said Jack to Firebrand, "does not consist of losing this treasure—it consists of escaping death thus far, for when we reach the United States you will suffer the penalty of a mere pirate, for by such perfidy was your infamous work here distinguished."

And grasping the wheel he started the machinery. The Mermaid left the lake, glided down the street into the Yellow Sea, and a moment later they were homeward bound.

Speed was put upon the boat, and driving ahead upon the surface at the rate of forty knots an hour, she sped out upon the Polynesian Sea.

"We will head for California," said Jack to his companions, "and land at San Francisco, where we can sell our cargo. There we can have the Mermaid dissected, and ship her on across the continent to Wrightstown, while we will travel by rail, instead of repeating the arduous trip by water we took to get here."

"That 'ere's the best plan," assented Tim; "an' right glad I am as our cruise is almost over, for I'm jist about played out wi' all ther trouble an' excitement we've been a-havin'. It reminds me o' a leetle matter as once happened ter me aboard the U. S. frigate Wabash, back in '49. Yer see—"

"Sweet violets!" began Fritz's accordion, just then, interrupting another lie of the old sailor; and with a whoop the

ancient mariner stumped into the cabin, from whence it came. The Mermaid dashed ahead, and there came the noise of the scuffle in the back room that brought a grin to Jack's face.

When it ended, Tim returned.

He had a black eye, but fortunately it was the glass one, and his nose was as red as a beet; but there was a happy grin on his weather-beaten face, and he chuckled:

"I've busted his accordion bellers at last, thank heavens!"

The trip across the Pacific passed without any further incident than an occasional tilt between Tim and Fritz, and in less than a week, favored by good weather, the Mermaid reached San Francisco.

Here the prisoners were locked up in jail, and the catamaran was docked, the cargo sold, and the boat taken apart.

Having packed it in a dozen large boxes, they were marked for Wrightstown, and shipped eastward.

Our friends had realized a rich harvest from their trip, as the sale of their cargo netted each one of them over a million.

Jack then secured his three prisoners, and passage was taken for Washington, where they arrived in due time, and, as the boy had telegraphed his success ahead and notified the authorities of his coming, he was well received by the Secretary of War.

The boy detailed his adventures, and told the history of the extermination of the phantom ship.

As evidence he brought in his three prisoners, and then referred the Secretary to the officers of the frigate that witnessed the destruction of the boat.

Having acquitted himself honorably and bravely of his duty, the boy joined his friends at their hotel, and after detailing all that transpired they left their prisoners in the hands of the police and took their departure for Wrightstown, to which place the boat and their baggage had preceded them.

Further investigation upon the part of the Secretary of War, however, became unnecessary, for Jack's party had not left Washington a day when Captain Firebrand confessed his crime, and then cheated justice by hanging himself to his prison cell door.

His two companions were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment for their complicity, and when the frigate came to port and the crew substantiated Jack's story, the rest of the Chinese prisoners were tried, convicted, and sent to join their two friends.

Jack in due time received the reward of the Government and the thanks of the American merchant marine, for ridding the Yellow Sea of the pest which so long had been a terror to them all.

Upon the boy's arrival in Wrightstown with his friends, he found that all traces of the fire had been removed during their absence, and that the place was restored to its wonted appearance, save where many houses were missing.

Pocketing his losses with philosophical nonchalance, the boy resumed his building operations, and in due time the town not only was enlarged, but it was beautified beyond description.

Tim and Fritz sold out their business, and went to live with Jack at his beautiful home, and there the busy brain of the young inventor was kept active concocting numerous plans of marine wonders, which are bound to be developed in due course of time to again make the world ring with his praises.

Some day he may return to the Yellow Sea and get the rest of the treasure.

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HELP YOUR COUNTRY!

REPORTERS OFF TO WAR.

Because all the reporters of the Tulsa Democrat and the Tulsa Times have enlisted in the army or navy, young women will be employed as reporters hereafter on these two newspapers. Already the force is made up mainly of girls. Other reporters who go to enlist in a short time will be replaced by young women.

Nearly all the girl reporters have had some experience, although a few of them are "cubs." The oldest woman employed in the news department admits that she is past fifty. She came from England and had been employed on newspapers there. The others are all young. They are ambitious.

The Democrat and the Times are the two daily newspapers owned by Charles Page, oil well owner and founder of the Orphans' Home at Sand Springs, seven miles from Tulsa. There he supports 300 orphans and nearly 100 widows. He receives a large income from oil wells, his newspapers and his inter-urban railroad system.

The newspaper men who have joined the army have been told by Page that every man shall have his place back when he returns.

When Carl J. Sandberg of The Folks, Maine, enlisted the other day with Company E of Skowhegan, which is now doing guard duty, he upset the entire officialdom of the town. He was the principal of the high school, assistant postmaster, chairman of the Board of Selectmen, superintendent of schools, notary public, tax collector and game warden. But patriotism overcame all these honors and he walked out of all these official robes to help Uncle Sam in his scrap with the Kaiser. The Folks is not a large place, having about 200 residents and a valuation of about \$300,000. It is largely a lumbering community and is fifty miles northwest of Skowhegan, in Somerset County. Sandberg was not the whole town, but as shown by the honors conferred upon him, he was a real somebody in the community.

JACK DILLON JOINS U. S. NAVY.

Jack Dillon, American light heavyweight, canceled all his ring engagements and enlisted in the United States navy. Dillon joined the colors under his real name, Ernest Cutler Price.

Dillon is the first American boxer of any prominence to enlist. He at one time sought a match with Jess Willard.

PAY OF ARMY ENLISTED MEN AND NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS.

The War Department has authorized the following:

As a convenient reference and a reply to numerous

queries as to the pay of enlisted men and noncommissioned officers now in force the forthcoming statement might be of use. These figures are based on the United States Army bill approved by the President May 18 and which went into effect June 1.

Briefly, it provides that men of the Army whose base pay does not exceed \$21 a month shall receive an increase of \$15 per month; not exceeding \$24 a month an increase of \$12 a month; receiving \$30, \$36, or \$40 a month an increase of \$8; and \$45 or more an increase of \$6.

The new scale means that privates of Artillery, Cavalry, Infantry, Signal Corps, or Quartermaster Corps receiving \$15 a month according to the old scale will now receive \$30 a month. First-class privates of Engineers, Ordnance, Signal Corps, and Quartermaster Corps receiving \$18 will get \$32. Second-class privates of Engineers and Ordnance receiving \$15 will get \$30.

Corporals of Engineers, Ordnance, Signal Corps, and Quartermaster Corps formerly received \$24 a month; they will now get \$36. Corporals of Artillery, Cavalry and Infantry getting \$21 under the old scale will now receive \$36.

Sergeants, first class, of Signal Corps and Quartermaster Corps who formerly received \$45 will get \$51. First sergeants of Artillery, Cavalry, Infantry, and Engineers who were paid on the same basis will get a similar increase.

Sergeants of Engineers, Ordnance, Signal Corps, and Quartermaster Corps paid \$36 according to the old scale will now get \$44.

Sergeants of Artillery, Cavalry, and Infantry paid \$30 will get \$38.

The general term "sergeant" includes supply, mess, and duty sergeants.

Bandsmen were formerly paid as follows: Sergeants, \$36; corporals, \$30; and privates, \$24. They will now receive \$44, \$38, and \$36, respectively.

Hospital Corps members received \$50 for sergeants, first class; \$30, sergeants; \$24, corporals; \$18, privates first class; and \$16, privates second class. The new scale makes the pay for sergeants, first class, \$56; \$38 for sergeants, \$36 for corporals; \$33 for privates, first class; and \$31 for privates second class.

Enlisted men of the United States Army are now receiving the benefits of the pay increases provided for in the National Army act approved by President Wilson May 18. The new pay schedule went into effect June 1.

The act calls for increases of \$15 a month where the base pay does not exceed \$21 a month; \$12 a month where it does not exceed \$24; \$8 a month for \$30, \$36, and \$40 grades; and \$6 increase for grades paying \$45 a month or more.

HUSTLING JOE BROWN

—OR—

THE BOY WHO KEPT THE TOWN ALIVE

By WILLIAM WADE

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER IX (Continued).

And then, as there was no move to obey, Joe's fist was hustled into the face of the snob!

It took him right between the eyes.

The fellow let go of Elsie in a hurry.

He staggered back, his high silk hat tumbling in the mud.

"You young scoundrel! I'll have you arrested for assault!" he roared.

"Good! Good! Hit him again, Joe!" cried several onlookers, and a crowd began to collect.

"Oh, Mr. Dodger! Pray come back to the automobile!" screamed Mrs. Redding. "I am sure the girl did not intend to steal your watch. We can have the tire repaired elsewhere."

"You won't get it fixed here, then!" cried Joe. "Be off about your business, you cur, or I'll give it to you again!"

Dodger sneaked.

"You shall hear from me!" he hissed, as he stepped into the automobile.

"But others could hiss as well as he, and a storm of hisses followed the auto outfit as the big red machine rolled limpingly in the direction of Oaklands.

"Oh, Joe, I never felt so humiliated in my life," gasped the school teacher. "I never touched his watch!"

"As though you had to say so to me!" cried Joe. "I saw it dangling when he got out of the machine. Don't you care, Elsie! I only wish now I had given him another crack!"

The incident was talked about all over town.

Later Mr. Randall, the superintendent of the rifle works, who looked in on Joe about a motorcycle he was repairing for his son, informed him that the man he had struck was none other than P. H. Dodger, the multi-millionaire president of the rifle trust.

"He's a big gun, Joe," he said, "and I am afraid he will make trouble for you; but all the same you were dead right. I only wish I could give him a crack on my own account. I never took such insolence from any man as I did when he called at the works."

"Is it true that he has obtained control, and intends to put the works out of business?" demanded Joe.

"That is what it looks like," was the reply. "We used to think Colonel Redding a hard one, but that fellow is the limit. I can't talk. I would if I dared."

"Where is the Colonel?" demanded Joe. "What is he about while all this is going on?"

"Don't ask me. I'll never tell you," replied the superintendent. "It's a terrible mix-up. I asked Mrs. Redding that very question this morning; her answer was that she neither knew nor cared where her husband was. And then to think of this fire coming on top of it all!"

"What about the fire?" pressed Joe. "Have you any idea how it occurred?"

"It was set beyond all doubt," replied Mr. Randall, which was all he would say, and the conversation drifted to other things.

At five o'clock Tom came wheeling back, pretty well tired out, but with a face which showed the triumph he felt.

"Well, you look as if you had been hustling for fair!" cried Joe, as he entered the store.

"And that's what I have!" replied Tom. "There isn't a wood road on all Bald Face that I haven't covered. I was down in the nine-mile swamp and upon Black Mountain. Oh, I've been everywhere, Joe."

"And what did you strike?"

"A fellow on Black Mountain who told me that he knows where the leather man holds out."

"Well?"

"Oh, he didn't tell me. He asked me what there was in it for him. He said that the leather man did not like visitors, and didn't want to be disturbed, but if anyone would make it worth his while he would guide him to the place."

"In other words, that he is willing to sell out his friend the leather man if there is money enough in it."

"That's about the size of it. Of course I had no money to offer him, so there was nothing doing."

"That can be arranged. Ten dollars will surely buy him; but who is the fellow, anyhow?"

"He said his name was Matt Beavers. He's a bark gatherer for the tanneries. I can take you to him any time."

"We will see about it to-morrow," said Joe. "You have done first-rate, Tom, and to-morrow we will hustle together perhaps."

"You mean to see Col. Redding, Joe. You know where he is."

"Well, Tom, I won't deny it to you; but please don't press me any more. You know we talked that all out to a finish this morning. To-morrow I shall be ready for the next move."

Joe then told about his encounter with the great Dodger.

"He can't do a thing," cried Tom. "No wonder you got hot under the collar when he accused Elsie Bender of picking his pocket. He better not try any of his tricks in this town."

Joe finished up at six and went home to supper.

In the evening he was at it again, and at nine o'clock he locked up and started for Oaklands on foot.

He had not covered half the distance when a big white auto passed him.

(To be continued.)

CURRENT NEWS

INVENT GUN TO FIRE 2,400 SHOTS A MINUTE.

Earl H. Keller, a court stenographer assigned to the Flushing Court, recently filed application with the patent office for a patent on a multiple machine gun unit. Keller says from two to six machine guns may be mounted and fire 2,400 shots a minute.

The fire of the unit is controlled by one gunner, and the feeding of shells to the guns is accomplished by assistants. Each individual gun of the unit may be trained upon a separate target, or all the guns at one target, or different combinations of more than one gun to a target may be made to suit the necessities of the case.

ANCIENT INDIAN DITCHES.

The remains of irrigation systems that date back to prehistoric times when the valleys of Arizona were inhabited by highly civilized Indian tribes are still in existence. One of the most famous of these is on the State highway running from Prescott to the Grand Canyon. Water is taken from what is known as "Montezuma's Well," a curious natural well 440 feet in diameter and 93 feet deep, except in one spot, where no bottom has been reached at 500 feet. Lime in solution is carried by the water, and the sides of the ditch have been preserved by the petrification of the original earth.

One ranch owner is using several thousand feet of these ditches after simply cleaning them out. A line of levels was run along the bottom of one of these old Indian ditches and showed the grade to be almost perfectly uniform at the rate of 0.01 feet per 100 feet.

FEED PUMPKINS.

Pumpkins, squashes and melons can be made to grow very rapidly by feeding them on syrup, and this feeding process is quite simple. A concentrated syrup is prepared by dissolving sugar in water in several jars or crocks. The water may be heated to make the sugar dissolve more rapidly, but the syrups must not be allowed to boil.

A fruit that has well formed, but is still young and small, must be chosen. Two crocks of syrup are placed beside it, pressed into the earth so that they shall not be upset. Some pieces of cotton string or small lamp-wicks are cut long enough to reach from the squash to the bottom of the crocks. With a pen-knife two slits are cut into the thickest part of the stalk of the squash and the ends of the wicks are inserted. The holes must not connect with each other or go through the stalk. The other ends of the wicks are dropped into the syrup. Then you have only to wait and watch the squash grow.

It is necessary to stir the syrup once in a while and to see that there is always plenty of it in the crocks.

SEEK DE SOTO TREASURE.

The search for treasure, started by Vol Kelly of Clarksville, Ind., many years ago, is said to have been renewed, as numerous holes have been dug along Nagle's creek, in the vicinity in which Kelly used to search.

The identity of the new seekers is not known, as the digging has been done at night. Kelly believed treasure was hidden because of an ancient record concerning De Soto. The tale is that his treasurer, Fernandez, deserted him, taking the money chest, and that this was buried not far from the falls of the Ohio, when he was attacked by Indians. Kelly used a divining rod which was supposed to dip at the presence of gold.

Another old legend is that a Spanish knight appeared, clad in black with helmet and armor, and danced a fantastic dance in the moonlight, the theory of the superstitious being that it was Fernandez, who gloated over the failure of those who sought to find the gold. Treasures, revealing or suggesting long-forgotten or unknown history, are not uncommon here. Bodies, skulls and weapons are among the things found, sometimes near the surface. A few years ago, Albert Hume discovered what were supposed to be bodies of chiefs, their heads surrounded with beautifully worked spear points.

ORIGIN OF BANKS AND BANK NOTES.

With the almost entire use of paper currency at the present time the history of their origin may not be uninteresting. In the days of the Stuarts merchants used to lodge their reserves of gold in the Tower, and when one day Charles I., in a thoughtless moment, annexed a large sum lodged in that way, and forgot to put it back, the merchants decided that henceforth they would put no more trust in princes, but would look to the goldsmiths. The goldsmiths thereby became the first bankers and the first goldsmiths who hit upon the novel idea of giving a note, not only to the person who deposited gold, but also, the person who came to borrow, founded modern banking with an original deposit of \$25,000.

The banker gave promise to pay up to, say, \$125,000, and as long as there was no immediate demand on the part of the persons holding these promises to pay to have that promise converted into cash, business proceeded merrily, but necessarily there was a limit beyond which it was not safe to do this kind of business, and it was always possible that something unforeseen might happen that would bring an unusual number of notes for presentation. As a matter of fact, this did happen frequently in the early days, and finally the government stepped in and granted the almost entire monopoly of issuing notes to the Bank of England.

NEWS OF THE DAY

THROUGH FIRE TO WED.

Through fire for love was no sham cry by Alfred Arney and Miss Clara Feldhousner of International Falls, who came to Bandette, Minn., in an automobile to be married, accompanied by George Stoffels and Caroline Feldhousner.

On the Canadian side, between Emo and Barwick, they had to fight their way through a forest fire burning fiercely on both sides of the road. The smoke blinded them. The men covered the women with auto robes and raced at full speed through the burning woods.

Brush fires in this section were worse than they have been since 1910. Many barns and homesteads were destroyed.

FLY 48 MILES IN 43 MINUTES.

Four aeroplanes, each carrying a pilot and observer, flew from the aviation field at Princeton University to Sea Girt, the encampment site of the New Jersey National Guard, the other afternoon. The two machines piloted by Lieut. Edward R. Kennerison and Chief Mechanician Earl Southee and carrying Marshall F. Mills and Frank Stanton as observers made the forty-eight mile flight in about 43 minutes. The other planes, carrying Lieuts. Paul Culver and Joseph Stevenson as pilots and James Barnes and Allen Devin as observers, went out of their course and didn't arrive until fifty minutes after they had left Princeton.

The aviators were greeted by Gov. Walter E. Edge of New Jersey and Adj.-Gen. Harold Barber of the New Jersey National Guard. Gen. Barber made a fifteen minute flight with Lieut. Stevenson, who is stationed at the military reservation at Governors Island, and the aviators each made exhibition flights for a crowd of several thousand people who had gathered at the encampment grounds. The machines left on the return trip to Princeton about 5 o'clock.

LONDON BEGS FOR OLD RAGS.

London is now having a series of rag days. Wagons decked with Union Jacks are parading each district or borough in search of rags. Leading the horse that draws the wagon is a man attired in white, looking much like the "white wings," or street cleaners, of American cities, who shakes a bell and entreats people to bring out their rags. The rags are wanted to make up for the shortage of woollen and cotton raw material for army clothing, blankets, etc.

Every one of the twenty-eight boroughs in the metropolitan area is to be canvassed before the summer is over. This means that the search for rags will be carried on in every nook and corner of the 700 square miles which comprises Greater London

and that it is planned to make personal visits to at least half of the 600,000 buildings in the metropolitan area. No one who has not been in London long enough to realize what a great pile it is can form an adequate conception of what a vast task lays before these new found ragpickers.

To meet this competition the private ragpicker has a new line of barter that is quite unique. He now offers one or two pounds of potatoes for about eight pounds of rags. The housekeeper, who perhaps has not seen a potato for weeks, eagerly accepts this offer, forgetting that the market value of the potatoes is but seven cents a pound, while her rags are worth about 25 cents a pound at present prices.

The rags and clothes collected by the official ragpickers are all torn into shreds, sterilized and redressed before use. They will be welcomed by the army authorities, who are very short of raw materials, for the manufacture of khaki and army blankets.

FACTS ABOUT AFRICA.

Nearly one-quarter of the earth's land surface is comprised within the continent of Africa. It is as far around the coast of Africa as it is around the world. Every eighth person of the world's population lives in the dark continent. The blacks double their number every forty years and the whites every eighty years. There are 843 languages and dialects in use among the black of Africa. Only a few of the languages have been reduced to writing. Thirty-five years ago the export of cocoa from the gold coast amounted to \$20. To-day it is over \$8,000,000. The coal fields of Africa aggregate 800,000 square miles; its copper fields equal those of North America and Europe combined, and it has undeveloped iron ore amounting to five times that of North America. Africa has 40,000 miles of river and lake navigation, and water powers aggregating ninety times those of Niagara Falls.

If Africa had the same proportion of railroad mileage as the United States according to its size, it would have a million miles of track instead of the 25,000 miles now in operation. One area in Africa unoccupied by missionaries is three times the size of New England, a second would make four states like New York, a third would cover eight Iowas, and a fourth is eighteen times the size of Ohio. Throughout Africa there is one missionary for every 133,000 miles.

Almost the entire continent is now under European flags. France has a colony in Africa twenty times the size of France itself. The British flag flies over a territory as large as the United States, and extends almost without interruption from the Cape to Cairo, a distance of 6,000 miles.

OUT FOR MONEY

—OR—

A POOR BOY'S CHANCE IN A BIG CITY

BY J. P. RICHARDS

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER V (Continued).

"You funny boy," laughed Daisy. "I didn't mean that, of course. You will call?"

"Yes, if you like. I've got to get out here. I'm awful glad I met you and that I saved you from a nasty fall. Good-by," and Phil tipped his hat, for if he had been a street boy the greater part of his short life, he had naturally good manners.

"Good-by," said Daisy. "Come soon," and she thrust a neatly engraved card into his hand as he started for the door.

"Thanks; I'd like to very much."

As the train started on again she waved her hand to him from the window, and as Phil went up to the street, he muttered:

"Gee, but she's a peach! She's all to the good, she is! I hope I didn't make any bad breaks; but, say, I never knew that those rich folks could make you feel so easy. Why, I thought they were all a stand-offish lot and made you keep to your corner. She isn't, not a bit."

Phil would have felt all the more elated if he could have heard Daisy Edgerton say to herself as the train whizzed on:

"Why, Uncle Harrison says that not more than a month ago he was selling papers in the street. Well, I don't care if he was. He's a gentleman born if ever there was one. He's as brave as a lion and as sharp as a steel trap. He's an all-around boy, and I'd like to know more just like him."

Phil had been up to see Jim Matthews once or twice, and once he had taken Bess, with whom the young couple were greatly propoessed.

"You're right, Phil," said the clerk, "that little girl is no ordinary child, and I wouldn't be surprised if some day she turned out to be somebody."

"Shouldn't wonder if she did, seeing that she's somebody now."

"Oh, I mean somebody of importance. You're always joking."

"Well, I can't help that. It's what keeps me going. I wouldn't give a nickel for myself if I couldn't get some fun out of life."

"That's all right and so you do," said Mrs. Jim, as Phil called her. "You must come to see us often. I know it's a long way, but the Subway gets you there quick."

"Yes, but there ought to be something to make up for having to live in a Harlem flat," said Phil, whereat they all laughed.

Early in the next week the president called Phil into his private office and said sharply:

"What have you been doing now, you young rascal? What do you mean by putting me under obligations? You've quite turned the girl's head, too, and I always thought she had a level one. What do you mean by it?"

Phil said nothing and in a moment the peppery old gentleman resumed:

"You're a sensible boy, Philip. Don't go to falling in love with my niece. There is lots of time for that sort of thing yet. Glad to know you acted so well. Still I might have expected it. I'll tell the cashier to give you two dollars more a week. No, it isn't for saving Daisy's neck. It's because you've earned it by your work. By the way, the young lady would like to see you there this evening. That's all."

"I'm very much obliged, sir, for the advance and the invitation," said Phil, and then he went out, and for the rest of the afternoon it seemed to him as if he were floating on air.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW HAROLD WATERBURY GOT INK ON HIS FINGERS.

"Can't you run up and take tea with us, Phil?" asked Matthews, as the clerks were getting ready to leave.

"I can't, thanks," said Phil, coloring. "I've got another engagement."

He did not tell what it was, and Matthews did not ask him, but he did think it queer that the boy should flush up so.

"It's all right," said Phil to himself. "I ain't falling in love with any one yet. I'm not in her class. I can't stay away, though. It wouldn't be doing the square thing after she's asked me. Besides, she don't put on airs the way they say these rich folks do. She's all right, and she acts as if she hadn't any more money than I have."

On the way over to Mrs. Mulligan's he stopped at a stationer's and bought a small bottle of red ink, for he was doing work at home most every night, and he wanted the red ink for ruling.

For a boy who had had as little schooling as he had, he was a very good penman, made figures very neatly and could rule almost as well freehand as with a ruler.

Matthews had suggested his working at home, and Phil took to the idea, and had already greatly improved, a circumstance which everybody in the bank had noticed.

Crossing City Hall Park, he met Butts, a former newsboy companion, and the latter, in a spirit of fun, slapped him vigorously on the side, saying:

"Hallo, old sport, got to be boss of the bank yet?"

There was a sound of broken glass, and Phil thrust his hand into the side pocket of his jacket.

(To be continued.)

FACTS WORTH READING

CUT OFF SOLDIERS' SWEETS.

Eating of cake and candy was forbidden in the barracks of one of the companies of the Reserve Officers' Training Camp, Fort Sheridan, Ill., recently, and it was asserted similar orders shortly would be posted in all of the company barracks. It was asserted that numbers of the men were not hardening under the physical drill as rapidly as possible because of cookies, candy and soda water consumed between meals. Unused to the work in the open, others, it was said, had been overeating at meal times. The latter practice, however, is automatically righting itself.

DEER EAT SPRING CROPS.

The damage done by deer in a number of parts of Pennsylvania is being brought to the attention of the authorities. Eight were seen in the fields of F. B. Overfield of Middle Smithfield Township lately. Deer are eating the growing grain of the farmers, and at Shawnee-on-Delaware, deer have been eating the spring grains with avidity. The reason for the boldness of the deer lies in the fact that the forest growth is so slim and unnutritive that the fleet-footed game simply is compelled to seek pasturage in the open. It is said that herds that have been causing most damage have crossed from Susquehanna County and some New Jersey sections.

NEARLY 800 RATS KILLED.

On "rat killing day" at the farm of Lewis A. Tyrell, Bridgeville, Del., all the neighbors and their dogs were invited to attend, and nearly 800 rats were killed. The men removed the floors from all the barns while the boys and dogs did the killing.

The rats ran all over the farm and took refuge in fodder and hay stacks, but so determined was the crowd to kill all that even the stacks were torn down to clear out the pests.

During the winter, Tyrell estimated, the rats had eaten more than 100 bushels of corn, worth now \$1.90 a bushel. When they began to attack his flock of 800 chickens he determined it was time to stop the mischief.

WHY DOES A GLOW-WORM GLOW?

A glow-worm is a kind of beetle which may be found in the yards and hedges in the summer time. The name applies only to the female of the species which is wingless and whose body resembles that of a caterpillar somewhat and emits a shining green light from the end of the abdomen, says the Book of Wonders. The male of this species has wings but does not show any light as does the female and re-

sembles an ordinary beetle. The male flies about in the evening looking for the female and she makes her light glow in order that the male may find her. Glow-worms are found mostly in England. There are, however, some members of the same species of beetle common to the United States. We speak of them as fireflies or lightning bugs. The female of these also is the only one carrying a light, although unlike the glow-worm she has wings and can fly.

BARRACKS TO BE BUILT AT WRIGHTSTOWN, N. J.

The War Department announced that Wrightstown, N. J., had been chosen as a site for one of the sixteen wooden cantonments to be established to shelter and train the half million men of the national army.

The War Department has abandoned its plans for establishing thirty-two cantonments. The original plan was to train sixteen draft divisions in as many cantonments and sixteen National Guard divisions in sixteen other cantonments. It has now been decided to establish only sixteen cantonments for the training of the draft army, and to establish sixteen camps for training the guard. The cantonments are to have wooden barracks. The guard camps will consist of tents. Secretary Baker authorized this statement regarding the changed plans:

"The original plan was to build thirty-two cantonments, or divisional encampments. The department commanders were directed to appoint boards to study the available places and make recommendations which would lead to the selection of thirty-two such places.

"The Quartermaster General's Department, co-operating with the Council of National Defense Committee, studied the project and discovered that the cost of building the number of cantonments contemplated would be beyond the possibilities of the appropriation that Congress is now considering. It was further discovered that it would be impracticable to build that number on account of lack of labor, material, and transportation facilities. The supply of tentage has been increased now to such an extent that it will be possible to have some of the encampments in tents.

"The War College recommended that the number be reduced to sixteen; the places, however, have not yet been definitely selected, the Chief of Staff being in communication with the department commanders with a view to making the selections."

A canvas shortage was largely responsible for the original plan to house the army in wooden barracks, for army officials have preferred tenting from the start. Most of the tents used probably will be placed at Southern camps.

THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES

ONE CENT FOR OVERTIME.

A check for 1 cent, made out by the Chicago, Peoria and St. Louis Railroad, was received the other day by John Grissom of Alton, Mo., a brakeman. It was in payment for a few minutes' overtime. Conductor W. C. Corey received a check for 16 cents. The payments were made as a result of the new Eight-hour Law. Some of the Alton employees of the road received checks for as much as \$200 for overtime earned since Jan. 1.

BEAN A RHEUMATISM CHARM.

Michael Bouresket, seventy-three years old, and his band of "fortune tellers" will be banished from Windsor, Ont., by an order of Magistrate Leggatt. Boureskat and Mrs. Dora Eveno, his seventeen-year-old daughter, were in court charged with obtaining money by false pretenses. The father was found guilty of inducing a man to part with \$30, after representing that he could cure him of rheumatism. An ordinary bean tied in the corner of a yellow handkerchief was the charm given as a cure-all. The daughter was released.

MAN WITH BROKEN NECK RECOVERING.

John Clingan of Goldfield, Nev., whose neck was broken in a fall in a mine on April 7, is from all indications recovering from what is usually a fatal injury. He was paralyzed from the neck down for several weeks, but has now regained the use of his entire body with the exception of his right arm, and is even able now to move the fingers of his right hand, showing that pressure on the spinal cord by the broken vertebrae has been almost entirely removed. His head has been held immovable in a plaster cast for five weeks, with heavy weights pulling up on his head and down on his shoulders to draw the dislocated spine into place.

WHY LOBSTERS TURN RED.

When a lobster is taken out of the lobster trap with which the fisherman traps him, he is green, but when he comes to the table as a choice morsel of food his shell is red. We know that he has been boiled and we know that he goes into the boiling water green and comes out red. This change in the color of the shell of the lobster is the result of the effect of boiling water on the coloring material in the shell, according to the Book of Wonders. When the lobster is put in the boiling water the process of boiling produces a chemical change in the color material in the lobster's shell. There is no particular reason why the lobster should turn red excepting that that is the effect boiling water has on the coloring matter in the shell.

DEMAND ERIE RAILROAD ABANDON STATION SALOON.

The latest attack emanates from Arlington, N. J., the suburban home of hundreds of New York business men. Pastors of three churches pray that the Erie officials will discontinue a saloon located in the prehistoric station of the road in Jersey City. They are the Rev. William Coombs of the First Presbyterian Church, the Rev. Sidney W. Powell of the First Baptist Church and the Rev. George W. Smith of the First M. E. Church.

This is the resolution which has been forwarded to the Erie:

"Realizing that the saloon is the greatest menace our country has to cope with, and believing that the action of the Erie Railroad Company in allowing a saloon to be maintained in the waiting room at Jersey City to be a source of peril and temptation to the traveling public, obliged to patronize their line and also their employees, to whom they look for safety; it is hereby

"Resolved, That we register our solemn protest and demand the abandonment of all sales of intoxicating liquors in the railroad station, in order to secure for us that safety which we are entitled to receive from a public servant enjoying a valuable franchise, through whose gateway we must pass to and from our State."

ORDERS PLACED FOR 5,200 FREIGHT CARS.

Orders for 5,200 freight cars have been placed in the last few days. Two railroads have decided to build cars in their own shops.

The Pennsylvania Railroad has authorized its Altoona shops to build 1,000 steel box cars, while the Norfolk & Western will build 2,000 box cars. The Union Railroad, which is owned by the United States Steel Corporation, has ordered 1,000 steel hopper cars from the Greenville Steel Car Company. The Santa Fe, which ordered 1,000 general service cars from the American Car & Foundry Company a fortnight ago, has increased this order to 1,500 cars. The American Car & Foundry Company has also taken an order for sixty tank cars for the Peerless Transit line.

The Mount Vernon Manufacturing Company has obtained orders for ten flat cars from the Brier Hill Steel Company and two flat cars from the United States Navy Department. The Pressed Steel Car Company will build 100 gondola cars for the Youngstown Sheet & Tube Company and twenty gondola cars for the Phillips Sheet & Tin Plate Company. The Bettendorf Company has taken an order for seventy underframes and trucks from the Illinois Central Railroad, which will build the bodies in its own shops.

PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, JULY 18, 1917.

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HARRY E. WOLFF, Publisher,
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Good Current News Articles

Only ten French ships were sunk by German submarines during the month of May. Twenty-eight French vessels were attacked by the U-boats, eighteen escaping. Patrol vessels fought twelve engagements with enemy submersibles and hydroplanes fourteen.

The hair does stand on end under certain conditions, because there is a little muscle down at the root of each hair that will make each hair stand up straight when this muscle pulls a certain way. It is difficult to say just how these muscles are caused to act in this way when we are frightened. We know that when thoroughly frightened our hair will sometimes stand straight up, and we know that it is this muscle at the root of each hair that makes it possible, says the Book of Wonders, but why it is that a big scare will make this muscle act this way we do not as yet know.

A French horticulturist, M. de Noyer, proposes the stems of spinach for making paper. These contain 46 per cent. of cellulose against 6 per cent. in the stems of wheat straw. M. de Noyer claims that in his experiments in making paper from spinach stems he has followed the methods of the Grenable paper-making school and has produced a product equal to the best Japanese in its remarkable consistency. He intimates in an article quoted in the Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry that with the proper culture of spinach for this purpose, remarkable economies in the manufacture of paper may be achieved.

Only in the United States can such a sight be seen as six acres of coal floating down a river as a single unit. This is the area of coal boats which the well-known stern-wheel steamer Sprague is capable of handling as a single tow. Four across-stream rows of twelve boats each make up the principal

part, according to the Popular Science Monthly for June. Back of the fourth row, however, eight boats find places together with two barges. Hence, there are fifty-six boats and two barges in the big fleet. The Sprague has her nose shoved in at the center of the fifth row. The fifty-nine vessels are lashed securely together by lines which run from boat to boat. Although the Sprague can push the fleet ahead, her chief duty is to hold back the load.

This great amount of coal is handled by a relatively small total of horsepower because the current of the onflowing river supplies a large part of the requisite energy.

Grins and Chuckles

"Why, Bobbie! You've got a hole in your stocking! It wasn't there this morning when you put them on." "Well, if it wasn't there, where was it?"

"What do you think of 'The Charge of the Six Hundred?'" "A mere trifle compared to the charges of my wife!"

Bobby—Papa, please stop singing to me. Papa—Why, Bobby? Bobby—Because I can never go to sleep when I'm frightened.

Mrs. Flatbush—How do you manage to keep a cook so long? Mrs. Bensonhurst—Oh, I get her to stay until my husband can raise some money to pay her.

Policeman—What are you standing 'ere for? Loafer—Nothin'. Policeman—Well, just move on. If everybody was to stand in one place, how would the rest get past?

"I don't think I deserve zero on this examination," said the pupil, as he took his geometry papers. "No, I do not, either, John, but that was the lowest I could give you," said the teacher.

Milkman—How much are your quart measures? Storekeeper—Thirty-five cents. Milkman—That's too much, and, besides, I don't need such a big one. Ain't you got a smaller one for less money?

"The boss is out," said the office boy. "He's gone to a directors' meeting." "When will he be back?" asked the caller. "Can't say exactly, but if the game don't run into extra innings he ought to be back by half-past five."

"My doctor has ordered me to Palm Beach for my health." "What seems to be the matter with you?" "I've been worrying too much about money matters." "Well, you won't have anything of that sort to worry you if you stay down there long enough."

ARTICLES OF ALL KINDS

GREAT AUSTRALIAN RANCHES.

The average size of pastoral holdings—that is, for cattle and sheep raising—in the northern territory of Australia is 275,000 acres. In West Australia 100 people own together 40,000,000 acres, and Fraser speaks of a Queensland “cattle king” who held 60,000 square miles, an area nearly as large as all New England.

FIRST BATH IN EIGHT YEARS.

A tramp, who refused to give his name, was arrested near Hope, Bartholomew County, Ind., after trying to enter a farm house. He was brought here and placed in jail. Matthew Shaw, Sheriff, immediately had him remove his clothes and take a bath. The tramp admitted it was the first time he had taken a bath in eight years. He said he had been placed in jail then and that his bath at that time was forced on him. He believes the present sanitary methods of jailers are a hardship. The tramp's clothing was burned and the Sheriff provided a new outfit.

WOMEN TO BE BARBERS.

Most Milwaukee barbers are subject to the registration and draft, and the problem now up to most barber shop proprietors is how to fill their places.

“If women can drive streets cars, steer automobiles and slide mail into mail boxes,” says Emil Triebs of 305 Chestnut street, “why can't they fill the places of the drafted barbers? Women barbers are no novelty in Milwaukee. They have been known to draw just as big salaries and bigger money than the men barbers. With the flower of Milwaukee barberdom joining the army and navy there will be many women barbers.”

Other Milwaukee barbers agreed with him, but deplore the lack of women trained for the work they could employ.

HOW HIGH DOES AIR GO?

It may not be generally known that Memorial Day was first observed on Southern soil. Professor Washburn and a company of teachers from Boston were engaged in educational work in Richmond, soon after the Civil War. In May, 1866, Professor Washburn proposed that they visit Belle Isle for the purpose of decorating the graves of the Union prisoners there. The plan was approved, and May 30 was chosen. All the school children, white and colored, were asked to bring flowers, and, in spite of rain, the little band carried out its purpose. A large floral cross was placed in a central spot, and a bouquet on each grave; then a memorial hymn was sung, and at that moment the clouds suddenly parted and the sunlight fell upon the cross, about which they knelt in prayer. The following year the ladies

of Richmond and other Southern cities decorated the Confederate graves on May 30; the next year General Logan, then commander-in-chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, issued a general order, setting apart the day for the purpose of thus honoring the memory of fallen comrades.

HELD BY DEVILFISH.

Richard Hernage and Olaf Oak had an experience recently with a devilfish that they are not likely to forget. The battle was fought ten miles out at sea, off Malibu Point, California.

The men were fishing from the thirty-foot gasoline launch Sea Lion when they suddenly became aware of the tentacles of the fish encircling the boat. They tried with bare hands to throw the tentacles off, fearing that the boat might be dragged to the bottom. Instead the fish pinioned their arms.

Oak had a sheath knife in his pocket and Harnage seized a boat-hook, the only weapon within reach. In the limited space they hacked at the tentacles until they got out of reach and by maneuvering Oak got an ax and fought the fish until it was subdued. The battle lasted two hours and the men were so exhausted they were unable to start the engine.

As they regained their strength they rowed the boat to shore and then sought doctors for their poisoned and wounded bodies. What was left of the devilfish still clinging to the boat weighed 130 pounds.

GREAT FRUIT CROP.

Unless weather conditions should be exceptionally unfavorable in the next few months, the prospects are that New Jersey will have one of the best fruit crops in its history. There should be a heavy production of berries, peaches, apples and small fruits. Fruit growers are having great difficulty in obtaining labor at this time that can spray the fruit, so that it will be free from insect and disease blemishes and damage. However, when the fruit is ready for harvesting and shipping, the labor situation is likely to become much more acute, since it is doubtful whether much labor can be secured from outside districts to help in the harvesting of New Jersey crops. The best solution to the problem appears to be to organize the boys and girls from thirteen to fifteen years of age in our schools and give them instruction in the harvesting and packing of fruit.

The horticultural department of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station will attempt to co-operated with the State Board of Agriculture and the State Board of Education in trying to arrange a plan whereby boys and girls of the ages mentioned may be given such instruction during the early summer at the close of school.

THE CANADIAN WONDER CARD TRICK.



Astonishing, wonderful, and perplexing! Have you seen them? Any child can work them, and yet, what they do is so amusing that the sharpest people on earth are fooled. We cannot tell you what they do, or others would get next and spoil the fun. Just get a set and read the directions. The results will startle your friends and utterly mystify them. A genuine good thing if you wish to have no end of amusement.

Price 10c. by mail, postpaid.
H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

GREAT BURGLAR PUZZLE.



The latest and most fascinating puzzle ever placed on the market. Patented May 30. It consists of four revolving dials, each dial containing 16 figures, 64 figures in all. To open the safe these dials must be turned around until the figures in each of the 16 columns added together total 40. The puzzle is made on the plan of the combination lock on the large iron safes that open on a combination of figures. Persons have been known to sit up all night, so interested have they become trying to get each column to total 40, in this fascinating puzzle. With the printed key which we send with each puzzle the figures can be set in a few minutes so as to total 40 in each column.

Price 15 cents; mailed, postpaid.
H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE BALANCING BIRD.



It measures more than four inches from tip to tip of wings, and will balance perfectly on the tip of your finger nail, on the point of a lead pencil, or on any pointed instrument, only the tip of the bill resting on the nail or pencil point, the whole body of the bird being suspended in the air with nothing to rest on. It will not fall off unless shaken off. A great novelty. Wonderful, amusing and instructive.

Price 10 cents, mailed postpaid.
WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

SHERIFF BADGE.



With this badge attached to your coat or vest you can show the boys that you are a sheriff, and if they don't behave themselves you might lock them up. It is a beautiful nickel-plated badge, 2 1/4 by 2 1/2 inches in size, with the words "Sheriff 23. By Heck"

in nickel letters on the face of it, with a pin on the back for attaching it to your clothing. Send for one and have some fun with the boys.

Price 15 cents, or 3 for 40 cents; sent by mail, postpaid.
H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

SCIENTIFIC MIND READING.



Wonderful! Startling! Scientific! You hand a friend a handsome set of cards on which are printed the names of the 28 United States Presidents. Ask him to secretly select a name and hold the card to his forehead and think of the name. Like a flash comes the answer "Lincoln. Washington, or whatever name he is thinking of. The more you repeat it the more puzzling it becomes. With our outfit you can do it anywhere, any time, with anybody. Startle your friends. Do it at the next party or at your club and be the lion of the evening. This was invented by a famous magician.

Price, with complete set of cards and full instructions, 12 cents, mailed, postpaid.
C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

LINK THE LINK PUZZLE.



The sensation of the day. Pronounced by all, the most baffling and scientific novelty out. Thousands have worked at it for hours without mastering it, still it can be done in two seconds by giving the links the proper twist, but unless you know how, the harder you twist them the tighter they grow. Price, 6c.; 3 for 15c.; one dozen, 50c., by mail, postpaid.

FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

MYSTERIOUS PLATE LIFTER.

Made of fine rubber, with bulb on one end and inflator at other. Place it under a table cover, under plate or glass, and bulb is pressed underneath, object rises mysteriously; 40 inches long. Price 25c., postpaid.
C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

THE HELLO PUZZLE.



Can you get the ring off? This puzzle is the latest creation of Yankee ingenuity. Apparently it is the easiest thing in the world to remove the ring from the block, but it takes hours of study to discover the trick, unless you know how it is done. Price by mail, postpaid, 10c.; 3 for 25c.
H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

RUBBER TACKS.



They come six in a box. A wonderful imitation of the real tack. Made of rubber. The box in which they come is the ordinary tack box. This is a great parlor entertainer and you can play a lot of tricks with the tacks. Place them in the palm of your hand, point upward. Then slap the other hand over the tacks and it will seem as if you are committing suicide. Or you can show the tacks and then put them in your mouth and chew them, making believe you have swallowed them. Your friends will think you are a magician. Then, again, you can exhibit the tacks and then quickly push one in your cheek or somebody else's cheek and they will shriek with fear. Absolutely harmless and a very practical and funny joke. Price, by mail, 10c. a box of six tacks; 3 for 25c., postpaid.
WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

JAPANESE MAGIC PAPER.



The latest, greatest and best little trick perfected by the ingenious Japanese is called Yaka Hula. It consists of two packages of specially prepared paper, one a sensitized medium, and the other a developing medium. The process of manufacture is a secret. By wetting a white sheet, and pressing a pink sheet on top of it, the white sheet will develop quaint photographic scenes, such as landscapes of Japan, portraits of Japanese characters, pictures of peculiar buildings, Gods, temples, etc. These pictures are replicas of actual photographs, and print up in a beautiful sepia brown color. Intensely interesting for both old and young. Price, 12c. per package, by mail, postpaid.
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LUCKY PENNY POCKET PIECE.



This handsome pocket piece is made of aluminum, resembling somewhat in size and appearance a silver dollar. In the center of the pocket piece is a new one-cent U. S. coin, inserted in such a way that it cannot be removed. (U. S. laws prevent our showing this coin in our engraving). On one side of the pocket piece are the words, "Lucky penny pocket piece; I bring good luck," and the design of a horseshoe. On the opposite side, "I am your mascot," "Keep me and never go broke," and two sprigs of four-leafed clover. These handsome pocket pieces are believed by many to be harbingers of good luck. Price 12 cents; 3 for 30 cents; by mail, postpaid.
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MAGIC PUZZLE KEYS.

Two keys interlocked in such a manner it seems impossible to separate them, but when learned it is easily done. Price 6c., by mail, postpaid.
WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

SECOE SPARKLER.



Hold discs in each hand and twist the strings by swinging the toy around and around about 30 times. Then move the hands apart, pulling on the discs and causing the strings to untwist. This will rotate the wheel and cause the sparks to fly. The continued rotation of the wheel will again twist the strings. When this twisting commences slacken the strings slightly until they are full twisted, then pull.

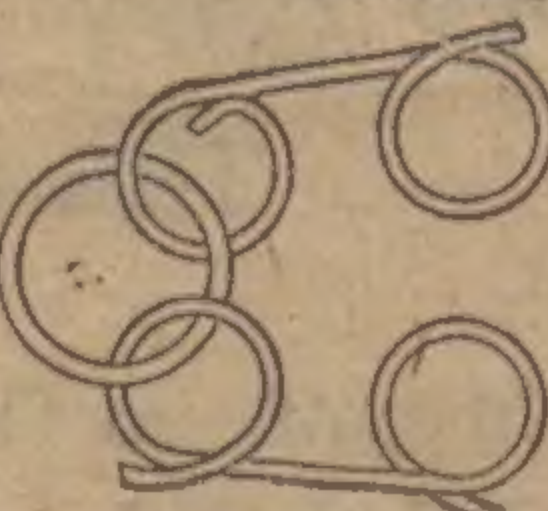
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BLACK-EYE JOKE.



New and amusing joker. The victim is told to hold the tube close to his eye so as to exclude all light from the back, and then to remove the tube until pictures appear in the center. In trying to locate the pictures he will receive the finest black-eye you ever saw. We furnish a small box of blackening preparation with each tube, so the joke can be used indefinitely. Those not in the trick will be caught every time. Absolutely harmless. Price by mail 15c. each; 2 for 25c.
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DEVIL'S LOCK PUZZLE.



Without exception, this is the hardest one of all. And yet, if you have the directions you can very easily do it. It consists of a ring passed through two links on shafts. The shanks of this puzzle are always in the way. Get one and learn how to take the ring off. Price 15c. by mail, postpaid, with directions.

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GOOD LUCK GUN FOB.



The real western article carried by the cowboys. It is made of fine leather with a highly nickeled buckle. The holster contains a metal gun, of the same pattern as those used by all the most famous scouts. Any boy wearing one of these fobs will attract attention. It will give him an air of western romance. The prettiest and most serviceable watch fob ever made. Send for one to-day. Price 20 cents each by mail postpaid.

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TRICK CIGARETTE BOX.

This one is a corker! Get a box right away, if you want to have a barrel of joy. Here's the secret: It looks like an ordinary red box of Turkish cigarettes. But it contains a trigger, under which you place a paper cap. Offer your friend a smoke and he raises the lid of the box. That explodes the cap, and if you are wise you will get out of sight with the box before he gets over thinking he was shot. Price 15c., postpaid.

WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

THE MODERN DANCERS.



These dancers are set in a gilt frame, the size of our engraving. By lighting a match and moving it in circular form at the back they can be made to dance furiously, the heat from the match warming them up. If you want to see an up-to-date tango dance send for this pretty charm.

Price, 15 cents, or 3 for 40 cents, sent by mail, postpaid.
Wolff Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

THE QUESTION PUZZLE.



Two links in the form of question marks, fastened together at the top. The object is to disengage one link from the other. It cannot be done without the directions. Price 10c, by mail, postpaid, with directions.

WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

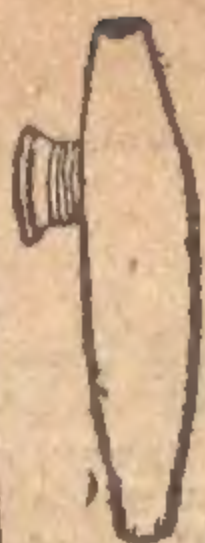
THE WAR FOUNTAIN PEN.



A very handsome fountain pen case to which is attached a pocket holder neatly made of metal and highly nickel-plated. When your friend desires the use of your pen and gets it, he is very much astonished when he removes the cap by the sudden and loud noise of the explosion that occurs, and yet a little paper cap does it all. Price, 35c, by mail, postpaid.

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Made in the exact shape of a submarine. With this comical little instrument you can give a bride and groom one of the finest serenades they ever received. Or, if you wish to use it as a ventriloquist, you will so completely change your voice that your best friend will not recognize it. Price, 12c, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

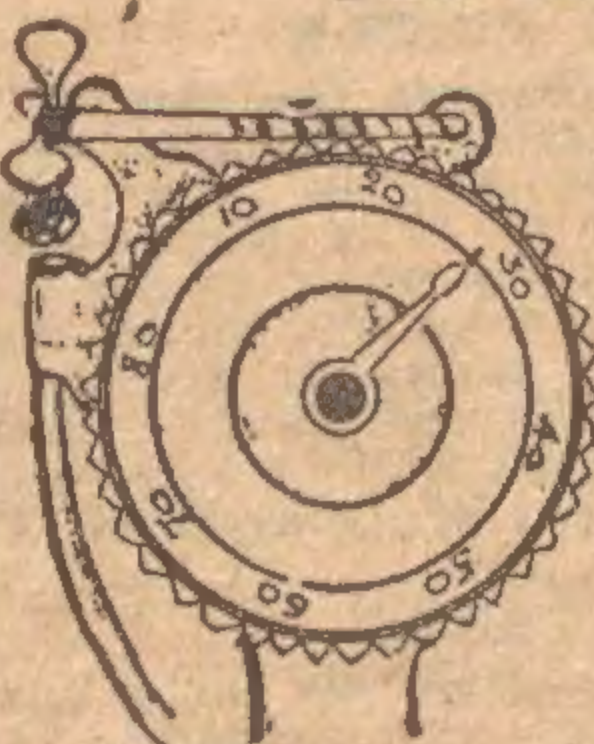
MAGIC LINK PUZZLE.



A number of rings. The scheme is to link them together just exactly the same way magicians link their hoops. It looks dead easy. But we defy anybody to do it unless they know the secret. Price 10c, by mail, postpaid.

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We have here one of the greatest little novelties ever produced. With this instrument you can absolutely test the strength of your lungs. It has an indicator which clearly shows you the number of pounds you can blow. Lots of fun testing your lungs. Get one and see what a good blower you are. Price 15c, by mail, postpaid.

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THE RUBBER DAGGER.



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The simplest trick out. All you have to do is to get the cigarette into Charlie's mouth. Ah, ha! But can you do it? We doubt it. Anyhow, you might try. It's a safe bet your friends can't work it. The trick is a stationary head and a loose cigarette in a metal box

with a glass top. If you don't get one you'll regret it, that's all. Price 12c, by mail, postpaid.

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A circular metal box with a glass top. Inside is a tiny garage fixed at one side and a loose traveling little Ford. It requires an expert to get the swiftly moving auto into the garage. This one grabs your interest, holds it, and almost makes you

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